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HISTORICAL ODES

AND

OTHER POEMS.

BY

RICHARD WATSON DIXON, M.A.

LONDON:
SMITH, ELDER AND CO., 65, CORNHILL.

M.DCCC.LXIV.

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TO HIS FRIEND

EDWARD BURNE JONES,

PAINTER,

These Poems

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THE AUTHOR.

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PREFACE.

The historical Poems in this volume were at first written as parts of a design to have been executed by me in conjunction with my friend Mr. Fulford; in connection with which his fine ode on Queen Elizabeth (published in 1862) was written.

Three of the other poems now published, viz., "Legion," "St. Thomas in India," "Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus," are further contributions to the series of Sacred Poems published by me in 1861 under the title of "Christ's Company."

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HISTORICAL ODES

AND OTHER POEMS.

Wellington: a Historical Ode.

I.

INTRODUCTION.

Brothers; we met around a father's grave
A few swift years ago: the earth we clave
As breathless with our loss as we had been
With triumphs, when upon a hundred plains
We followed him, where flashed the steel more keen,
The battle spread in redder stains.

Then looked we back upon his life, that road
Of victory, secure and long and broad,
With patience paved and virtue, Roman way,
Grand march of life heroic, which he drew,
His children paced; it leads from far Assaye,
And thence returns to Waterloo.

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Peace was his end; 'twas well; he wrought for peace
That iron road: his war made war to cease.
No other hand could stay the reign of blood,
The Fury Revolution, who had come
Of ancient tyranny, the monstrous brood
That leaped with groaning from the womb.

Think, brothers, living in a peaceful time
Of all the ravage, all the public crime,
The fields they fought, when earth was heaped with slain,
And mourned to be one open burial-place;
The fleets they filled, whose relics strewed the main;
Yearned Ocean o'er the human race.

The lust, the rage, the blood, the agony;
The horror-stricken nations dismally
Labouring out they knew not what: the end
Which comes not yet, O brothers! now was come
The Fury Revolution, child of fiend,
That leaped with groaning from the womb.

She came; her soul despair, her body death:
The systems shrivelled, as she drew her breath;
Dagons before her, headless, handless, fell;
The Cæsars' empire withered at her frown;
Then she allied her with the infidel,
And ancient right was smitten down.

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Blind, self-tormenting, raging, fiend of Dante,
In force of furious scope, in vision scanty,
She struck at friends as foes, but most abhorred
The homes of freedom on the hills and seas;
Heroic Reding fell beneath her sword,
And England watched her on the breeze.

Republics round her she affiliated;
Then gave her chieftains kingdoms reinstated:
She came in anarchy, and she became
A despotism so dreadly centralized,
That later tyranny directs her aim
Backward: no more can be devised.

She came: La Vendée sank in mitraillades;
The Loire, the Seine, were sickened with noyades:
Then coil o'er coil, she stretched in dragon might,
Till half the continent was made her lair;
Her eagle plumes waved shadows black as night,
Her dragon whorls did crush and tear.

She came with thunderous march of vertebrate
Procession; fenced in iron, grinding weight
Of cannon; rank by rank of men who wound
O'er mountains, undulated over plains,
Successive, ceaseless; blood her mornings crowned,
Her dews of night were bloody rains.

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Then battle grew a fiend, and monstrous Death
Exulted by sweet river and wild heath;
A shameless leper grinning at his sores;
He bathed in Danube, Scheldt, and Rhine, and Po,
He yelled with joy in burning Moscow's roars,
He rolled himself in Eylau's snow.

He sowed the dragon's teeth; the brood that sprung
He did conscribe, when they were over-young,
Into his hated service, forced to war
Ere truly they had left their mother earth:
Nature sufficed not; every natal star
Poured bloody runes upon its birth.

Then rose the nations maddened with their wrong:
The German brothers sang the people's song;
Then Hofer fell, and from his fall the brand
Passed westward, southward; in the Pyrenees
His Alpine echoes rang; the Spanish land
Rose like a lion from its knees.

Rose lion-like; but fell beneath the blows
Of myriad hunters; legions of fierce foes
Ravaged and slew from iron shore to shore:
Fell vengeful Saragossa—all in vain—
Gerona sank beside her: it was o'er;
The new Saguntum bled again.

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Then, like the angel of the sea and land,
Rose England for the struggling right to stand,
Resolved that now her arms should flash anew
In battle on the land as on the main;
Resolved to efface the failures hitherto—
Toulon, Dunkirk, and Walcheren,—

And to outshine Corunna's setting sun.
And it was e'en thy hand, O Wellington,
Should raise our standard where it gleamed of yore
Upon the crest of wildest battle-wave:
An ancient right that triple cross upbore
The agonizing world to save.

And England owned herself in thee: her staid
And speechless courage into virtue made,
Her patience into faith, which only sees
The spreading splendours breaking through the clouds,
And builds up peace from thousand victories,
And glory from a million shrouds.

Oh, mighty worker, mighty watcher! who
Remained save thee, save thine what work to do?
Nelson was gone, and Pitt had followed him;
Their work was done, yet still the strife increased,
The agony, the rending limb by limb,
The cruel demon at his feast.

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Footfall by footfall, line by line advanced
Thy liberation, thought on thought enhanced
Thy purpose; over armèd heads of chiefs
Till then unmatched, and launched like thunderbolts
By the gigantic grasper of king-fiefs—
Massenas, Marmonts, Soults—

Thy triumph lay, until the lord of all
With his full might met thine. His Satan fall
Made earth a heaven, and set thy glory o'er
Death's reach; thy glory to efface, the fount
Of time must backward to its sources pour,
The sum of years the heavens remount.

II.

THE PENINSULAR WAR.

1. *The Crisis of Europe.*

Spain's insurrection sank; one city held
Her senate; and her armies strewed
Her swart sierras. "All shall be subdued,"
The despot cried, who ever yet had felled
The neck of opposition; who had spelled
The nations with a charm of blood.

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Wherefore from Wagram, flushed and carnage-fed,
His legions pour; his iron horsemen tread
The Spanish flowers, his iron guards; the throng
Ends not; to where our little army waits,
Spain's latest hope, they close; as torrent strong
They close, they close; Massena leads their fates.

Ne'er yet had ebbed that battle-tide which rode
As one wide sea from Vistula
To Douro; rising, dancing in the ray
Of victor suns: and now, behold, it flowed
To meet the Atlantic with a wave as proud:
One rock alone opposed the way.

For it had risen year by year, and gained
In huge encroachments, till no more remained
A barrier of resistance south or east:
At Austerlitz and Friedland, Russia shrunk;
At Jena and at Wagram, Prussia ceased,
And Austria and all the centre sunk.

All silent now beneath those rolling waves,
Which covered all the wrecks of things,
And rolled alike o'er nations and their kings.
What whisper now within those glutted graves,
While half the world was made the despot's slaves,
And poured in tears its offerings?

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What whisper, save that England now had sent
Her little army to the Continent?
What hope, except that to the Southern west,
The Northern west was sending tardy aid—
England to Spain? Ah, were it not a jest
To breathe such solace to the world dismayed?

Seemed it not bitter mockery to say
That the few thousands landed now
On Lusian shore, should dare to wait a foe
Of hundred thousands three, the tidal way
Of universal overflow to stay?
And yet in very truth 'twas so.

"The wave that brought the islanders shall be
Their sepulchre; we drive them to the sea:
The Emperor wills; no toil remains save this;
Then Rome's dominion, Rome's renown is ours;
Corunna re-enact, and storm Cadiz."
Massena leads along his vaunting powers.

Right onward drives the gathered hurricane;
Its wreathing furious flakes invest
And scourge the land; as thunder on its crest
Sits Death; recede before it toward the main
Our gathered arms; the sun to set is fain;
Our sun seemed setting in the west.

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So fierce the onset that it seemed as ne'er
Had Talavera been; a great despair
One moment palsied England:—"Home; allow
Free course to fate: return, the blow decline."
Ah, then, my father, then no other brow
Was calm; no other hand prepared, save thine.

No other soul than thine perceived that there,
In the remote Peninsula,
The hope of Europe's disenthralment lay.
This was the consummation thou didst dare;
For this didst thou the greatest war prepare
That e'er did England's might array.

For this wast thou contented there to wield
The sword against each maréchal;
From Spain was Rome assailed by Hannibal;
And, when thy prophet hopes should be fulfilled,
Thence didst thou issue to the final field:
Cæsar returned on Rome from Gaul.

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2.

As he who limns a picture cannot trace
 Each separate form in field or wood,
That dwells in distance broken and subdued,
And blended in the gradual purple haze;
He masses all in mighty rounds of space
 And hues of magic brotherhood.

So I from out a hundred deeds must choose
Three which most mighty were; the rest confuse
In the deep distance of that atmosphere
Of time that doth embrace and shroud them all:
Let life heroic its own mystery wear,
And art be but a limner mystical.

For Torres Vedras turned the scale of fate
 Inclining it to victory,
When England's sun seemed hasting to the sea;
Half Spain did Salamanca liberate;
Vittoria rolled the war through Gallia's gate:
 The hero struck; his strokes were three.

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8. *Torres Vedras.*

Lo, that first miracle: the lines entraced
On leagues of Lusian shore, when we were chased
By fell Massena's power! Who wrought them so
In secret, suddenly to rise and quell
With thrice three hundred cannon mouths the foe,
To stay pursuit with might inflexible;

Like Grecian wall before the galleys reared,
Which even Hector stormed in vain;
Who wrought them so, demands the baffled train:
For lo, when swift the expected triumph neared,
Those triply ordered battlements appeared
Between the eagles and the main.

A month they lay there, hopeless to assail,
Loth to retreat. Then first that tide did fail
Which flooded half the world; it turned, they turned;
Fell back the surges of the iron sea,
Gleaming in hundred villas grimly burned,
Sounding in thousand cries of agony.

It was begun; the huge recoil which drew
Pursuit to Paris, where it stayed.
Europe revives: in German forest's shade
The Austrian, stiff in arms, doth strength renew
Against his giant foe; the Russian, too,
In awestruck ranks hath knelt and prayed.

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4. *Salamanca.*

Arose the twelfth year from the century:
Oh, Fate! two men were working diversely
In east and west, regardant each of other:
Napoleon's zenith—soon his star shall slope;
Wellington's dawn: one fate involves another;
One's glory gives the other's horoscope.

One crossed the Nieman, one the Aguada;
Invading empires both, they go
To Ciudad Rodrigo, to Smolensko—
To Borodino, to Vittoria—
To Moscow, to Madrid; our victor day
Napoleon saw through Russian snow.

From Torres Vedras they have turned; and, lo,
Pursuit usurps the place of overthrow;
Swift is our wingèd lion on his way:
Almeina sinks—no arts avert her fall;
Rodrigo sinks—can blood her doom repay?
Badajos sinks—can blood rebuild her wall?

Then rose the scene of war so strange and grand,
When Marmont came to stay the rout;
When side by side the mighty foes marched out
Toward the battle place which each had planned;
There front to front shall France and England stand,
And lift again the battle shout.

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Parallel rolled for leagues their columns, till
O'er Salamanca each his chosen hill
Had covered: there for many days they clung
Like thunder-clouds in scarce suspended strife;
Gerizim, Ebul; on those mountains hung
For Spain the curse or blessing, death or life.

Then came the mighty shock; who does not know
That Blenheim of our century;
That glorious battle turned to victory
By that heroic hand from blow to blow,
What time the mighty lion smote his foe
Upon the mountains deathfully?

And Marmont saw the greatest host that e'er
The Gaul had gathered, scattered into air
In one short hour; and vain were all his wiles,
In vain his lengthened columns doth he pour,
In vain reconcentrates his broken files;
The shattered eagle shall he lift no more.

Deluded slaves who served the tyrant's will,
Gay sons of France; the young, the bold,
Your glorious pride the bloody sods enfold;
Your mothers wait you where the orchards fill,
And all your hopes are scattered on that hill
Where dies a myriad doubly told.

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And the feigned king fled headlong from Madrid;
Back sank the eagles; half of Spain was rid
Of them for ever: ne'er they crossed again
Morena's armed sierra; Cadiz woke
From her environment, the iron chain
Forged in three years of war the captive broke.

More glorious sun for England never set:
Glorious the triumph which ye share,
Oh, warrior children, with your father there;
Oh, England's warrior children, ye who let
The Bengal noontide feed upon your sweat,
The Crimean frost your vitals wear.

Napoleon heard on Borodino's eve
The fatal news, refusing to believe;
And in the Kremlin to his ears there came,
Lone in the Kremlin with his destiny,
The Russian salvoes pouring glad acclaim,
"Madrid is occupied, half Spain is free."

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5. *Vittoria.*

Havoc, the miserable child of War,
Murder, and Rapine, cursed crew,
Hispania bore you; on her breast ye drew
As lengthened furrows as did ever scar,
As smouldering ruin raised, as e'er did char
Earth's quaking bosom smitten through.

By many a rushing river to the sea
Hispania's corpses rolled; o'er hill and lea
Her vultures sailed for carrion; many a maid
And wife by savage soldiery defiled
Fell, olive-pale, with deathly lips that prayed
O'er murdered father, husband, lover, child.

Many a palace nodded to its fall;
Those Moorish gateways, arched so wide,
Opened on court-yards red from side to side
With glaring blood on marble floor and wall,
And heapèd dead; the cloister, turned to stall,
Held Death's wild horses from their ride.

But now the hour is come when they who guard
So well their own home-island from the sword,
Shall finish that for which they crossed the main,
And from the bloody spoiler rescue thee;
And, because England frees thee, thou, O Spain,
The first of all the nations shalt be free.

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From Salamanca count a year of toil,
A winter's respite; then anew
Begins that march which shall the foe subdue
Without one pause from all the Spanish soil:
Vittoria's march: disgorging blood and spoil
The shattered eagle homeward flew.

The double columns move: the Gaul they sweep
From Douro backward to the northern deep:
No more Valladolid shall lothe the state
Of Gaulish marshal insolent: no more
Biscayan ports their stores accumulate;
That sweep superb has freed the northern shore.

While from Madrid their central army fled:
Fled, rapine-gorged, the official crew
Which long had sucked a nation's life; they drew
An endless spoil along; their hope, they said,
Beside Bayonne to meet their crownèd head;
Ah, first they met the vengeance due.

Within thy soul, great chieftain, was designed
That wondrous march; as faithfully combined
By every column-leader under thee;
Each day's advance was measured, till at last
We came upon Vittoria suddenly,
Where lay their cumbered army, swollen and vast.

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Vittoria, thou whose very name doth sound
Of victory, where vengeance just
Fell on those sons of murder and of lust,
Where one more righteous stroke to death did wound
A kingly hydra-head, where fell discrowned
King Joseph 'neath the final thrust!

O'er bridge and hill our legions burst their way;
The skirmish changed to battle; battle's bray
Died in disastrous carnage, foulest rout,
While melted all away the unwieldy host;
And far arose one agonizing shout,
One Beresina-wail when all was lost.

For all was lost; their relics strewed the plain;
Five years of pillage in a day
Lost; all the archives of that monstrous sway
Lost; and their latest army left in Spain
Lost, lost; but never lost the death and pain,
The bleeding witnesses who pray.

The hero struck; his strokes were three; the third
Through Europe sounded; doubting Austria heard,
Flung back the treacherous hand he offered her,
The giant evil-doer in his need:
"Join, Russians, join around his bristling lair,
Let Germany be freed as Spain is freed."

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Farewell to Spain, ye spoilers, ye who laved
In blood your footsteps o'er her plains;
Your day is done, your guilt alone remains.
The vulture, not the eagle, see, hath waved
His vans among the mountains; he had craved
A draught that drops from his own veins.

6.

They fled, close followed, to the Pyrenees,
The strife through all the winter did not cease;
Fell San Sebastian, Pampeluna fell,
Another Frankish rout saw Roncesvalles;
The Bidassoa, the Nive, and the Nivelle
In vain oppose swift stream and bristling wall.

Farewell to Spain; farewell the lurid waste
Of desert tracked by muleteer,
O'er which the dark sierra ridges rear
Their bastions; farewell ancient cities placed
In paradises, old Alhambras chased
With Saracenic scroll severe.

Through those dark Pyrenean glens did crawl
Those matchless foes; no wintry storms appal;

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Like wrestling snakes they wound from rock to rock;
Now, Gallia, feel the war-dogs thou didst loose:
In vain is Orthe's bloody battle shock,
In vain the volleying ridges of Toulouse.

And there the struggle ended; for, from east
And north the nations thronging on
Had pressed the giant despot from his throne:
But first 'midst all was England's flag released
To gales of France, and vengeance first did feast
Those who had fought by Wellington.

7.

Farewell to Spain for those who fought the fight,
The iron men who showed the English might,
Trained by thine eye and fashioned by thy skill
To be thy perfect instrument of war,
To march, to fight, untired, invincible;
"No army like the old Peninsular."

No chiefs like that renownèd school of men
Who wrought thy bidding, bore with thee
A worthy portion—Picton, Ponsonby,
Hill, Crawford, Graham, Beresford; in ken
As eagles, lion-like in daring when
The battle rolled in mystery.

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The bones of forty thousand Englishmen
Mix with the dusts of Spain; thy freedom then,
Hispania, cost so much: they toiled, traversed,
Marched, counter-marched, and fought and bled and died,
With him who saw the last from doubtful first,
And bore them through those empire-lists so wide.

No hero therefore like the man who gained
His glory as the common good;
The elder brother of the men who stood
Beside him, not a demi-god sustained
On blinded adulation; who remained
Unstaggered both by gold and blood.

From Spanish brides who wept upon the shore
The ordered transports all that army bore;
Fond creatures who had marched and camped with them
Long years; whom never may they see again.
They go; great England with her diadem
Leans o'er the purple seas: Farewell to Spain.

Yet is their work unended: lo, once more
Swoons Europe in the very smile
Of new-born peace—again the eagles soar,
Again the life-consuming cannon roar,
And horror-struck despair comes down; the while
The Continent implores the Isle.

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III.

WATERLOO.

1.

Came down on Gallia, Père la Violette:
His veterans named him so, and sternly set
His martial blazon on their breasts again;
Long had they mourned his absence with the pain
Of devotees, their idol cast in shade;
They bore him on their shields, while fled dismayed
Legitimacy, and the realm was his.

The smile was withered on the lips of peace;
The congress of the kings, that met
To arbitrate on crowns, was scattered far
By the fierce look of war.
Nor wholly undeserved their overset,
For golden languor, pleasure, vulgar thought,
Hollow ambition, had invaded them;
And that pacification ill was wrought
Which sunk the right below the diadem,
And yielded Poland to the Czar.

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Napoleon, e'en in that eleventh hour
Had thy vast soul recalled its godlike power
To utter freedom to the world, and be,
What God designs in all, and so designed in thee—
Yet one more issue to infinity—
Then were thy doom a thing of woe; but now
The light of truth had left thy brow,
The early hope which 'neath Italian skies
To thee drew wistful eyes,
When thy inspirèd face uplifted glowed
In each victorious sunset on thy road
Of blameless battle for thy country fought,
Not for thine empire; big with thought,
Pathetic, in the passion of its youth
Begetting noble truth.
Now sensual ambition, mastering all,
Had made that soul a thrall;
And all thy thoughts were faded and grown old,
Not leading progress to the goal of gold;
And he who wrought thine overthrow,
Leading the men who laboured to restore
The limitations of the age before,
He thy conqueror, he thy foe,
Was heaven's own champion for the rights of man.
Thine eagle fell behind; his lion led the van.

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2.

For all the earth, grown weary, sick, distressed
With bloody toil, now in the pause of rest
Beheld the work of war again begin,
The scourge of God returned. Long since akin
To war all hearts had grown; men had been born
Through whose whole life the earth had never worn
The look of peace; a generation bred
In battle, wrack, and flame, and nourished
With such like horrors into deadly mood:
And these in that first respite of their blood
Must clutch to them their iron arms again,
Resume their marches, slaughter, and be slain.
Loud-shouting war is here once more; loud war
Roars for more prey; the cannon-bearing car
Shall thunder through the land, career, and spread
Its nitrous vapours o'er the gory bed
Of battle, as the flying thunder wrack
Whirls through the space of heaven; the dreadful track
Of squadron rivers through battalion fields
Once more their eyes shall mark; the Fury yields
No hope, no change save that from life to death.
So be it, answered they, with quiet breath;
And took once more their places in the strife
Hopeless and careless; fate had set their life
This one mere task; their children would come next,
It was begun again. Thus unperplexed

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The Antichrist they saw returned, and gave
Themselves to feed the iron-surging wave
That now was setting toward the Gallic shore
From Belgium to the Czar, resigned once more
To meet encroaching Fate with tranquil phlegm:
Scythe-stroke by scythe-stroke Death might gather them,
And year by year; it was begun once more.

3.

Not so; no gradual swirl
Of closing waves the Pagod down did hurl,
But one great battle-shock
O'erthrew the towering rock;
The mighty deed which all the world reprieved
One arm alone in one great hour achieved.

4.

There lies a plain in Belgic land beside
War's nursling, Brussels; heavy fields divide
Two gentle slopes that ridge the vale between,
And on each flank a forest wraps the scene.
'Tis holy ground; it is the grave of war;
'Tis yearly hallowed; children come from far,
And weep upon the consecrated sod
Such tears as follow blood; 'tis gently trod

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By all the great with awfulness; and there
The skies more solemn roll, such sepulchre
Rises to meet them; there the cloud and sun
Have stranger issues, and the whitening moon
More mutely melancholy muses there;
For shrouding terror still enwraps the lair
Of such a deed: this grandeur is for us,
There stands the lion on our tumulus.

And there are laid in sleep, as day is done
(Ligny was lost, and Quatre Bras was won),
Two mighty hosts; the rain-cloud o'er them broods,
And night falls on them; those dark solitudes
Are full of slumberous life; the watch-fires glare
On readied cannon through the foggy air.
Death waits the morning in these lists prepared;
Here meet at last the champions who have shared
The world's renown between them—Europe's scourge,
Spain's liberator; both of them shall merge
All other opposition in this fate:
Round each of them their paladins await,
Those iron souls whom they to arms had trained;
And their tired armies sleep; by sleep unchained
To vision each the other's mighty deeds.

The fateful morning breaks; the dark recedes,
The camp fires die; the expectant shudder runs
Through moveless ranks; the bravest warrior shuns
The dreadful moment ere the work begin.
Oh, countrymen, I tell you, lose or win,

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That such another moment never shook
Time's hour-glass; never such another look
Of doubtful Mars so horrent, ere it booms,
The iron bell of battle; ere the drums
Throb, and the fifes shrill, and exultantly
The flame of battle lights the soldier's eye.
Yet tender were your hearts, my countrymen,
As was your courage dauntless. Who can pen
With undimmed eye that scene before the fray,
When ye embraced as brothers, with the bray
Of death within your ears, and kissed, and gave
Last words and gifts for those beyond the wave,
If he survived who took them: tender, true,
Loyal; how he would dare full well ye knew,
Who led your ranks, and well ye knew the foe.

How then stood England now let England know;
How stood our fathers then, when death and fame
Made covenant within the battle flame;
How stood they in the whirlwind of that fight.

They stood unmoved, when on the adverse height
The great Opposer gathered in his hands
Thunder and cloud, its shade; made firm the bands
Of massive columns ordered for attack,
And in his art, as masking these, made slack
His swarms of skirmishers; as great was he,
Be it not doubted, in his strategy,
As ever upon Austrian battle-plain:
Nor e'er did army labour to sustain

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Its old renown as the vast host he led:
Filled were its ranks with traitors perjurèd,
Who had for him forsworn their lawful king;
With desperate gamblers, who their all did fling
With his great cast for empire: needs must they
In this prodigious hazard fiercely play,
Now, as with clashing music, and the storm
Of louder shouts, the battle line they form
In splendid show, as if the very sight
Of their bold marshalling with dread should smite.
No clashing music led our fathers on;
Less splendidly in arms their cohorts shone.

They stood when first the opened cannonade
Lifted death's shroud to heaven from field and glade;
They stood when in a gloom of fire the bolts
Whole ranks in pieces dashed; the soul revolts
To watch their patient ranks, still formed anew
As death dissolves them: fewer stand the few.

They stood, they knelt, upon the bloody sod,
Lifting the prayer of battle unto God:
Each square so thinning as the day wore on
Was filled with martyrs who by blood atone
Sad earth with heaven. Others have dared to die,
In headlong charge; others as steadfastly
Have stood behind entrenchment and stone wall:
They on the naked earth dared stand and fall,
Gathered in islet squares so small and few.

They stood, while all the daylong battle through

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Each act of war upon their front was tried:
While dragon-breathèd guns sent thick and wide
Their furious tempest, doubling stroke on stroke;
While came assailing columns through the smoke
Weighty and vast, in densest order pressed,
And crushing forward up the hilly crest;
While the mailed horsemen, riding thousands strong
In constant onset poured the vale along;
Riding in thousands, never prouder flower
Of chivalry in battle-bed did bower;
Striving by steel, by force, by weight, to hew
Their passage through those islet squares so few.
For all our centre was one tossing sea
Of plumèd horsemen, and all furiously
For three long hours the battle spray arose
Where round the scarce-seen squares the riders close:
The battle glory there, the yellow drift,
The steel-blue sea of weapons, wildly swift,
Its long and deadly billows doth outpour;
So that he said, who ruled that desperate hour,
That the defence full soon must buried be
In ruin; sore amazed was he to see
The inundating charges still subside,
And still the rocks emerge from out the dying tide.
They stood while all the daylong battle raged
In such a wise; those two grand peers engaged
Each art of war, and still Napoleon gained
No mastery, though his army's blood had rained;

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For each assailing column had been rent,
Those flooding charges all were vainly spent.
There came with eve a lull; each furious gun
A moment intermitted, as the sun
Went sadly westward; will he leave the fight
Ere upon total ruin sink the night?
Not so; too savagely the battle lowers:
The Guards remain, the latest of his powers,
The breakers of resistance, they who tamed
The Russian and the German, and were named
The proudest soldiers in that warrior day;
The grand reserve that still inclined the fray,
When all was desperate; that still was cast
A thunderbolt the dreadest and the last;
The Guards; he cannot fly while these remain.
They stood—our fathers—when the bloody plain
Grew black with that vast phalanx; still they stood,
As calm as he who ruled their attitude,
As awfully reserved; and, lo, their foes
Are midway now the valley, now they close,
And mount the slope with England's battle lined;
Serried, enormous, black, they come; the wind
Bears upward their stern shouting; bristling arms
And flashing step, they come. The deep alarms
Of our concentric fire proclaims how high
The danger; each cleared volley shows more nigh;
Though death consumes the mighty column's head,
They come, and still with dauntless ranks they thread

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The dreadful open where the volleys meet,
And make one street of fire, with death to choke that street.
Still they re-form beyond it, grim and stern—
Still recommence their march; they almost turn
Our hill-crest; they are here! Behold them now,
Behold the pallid frowning of their brow
Beneath the giant bearskin shaking o'er it;
The waving eagle see; 'tis they who bore it
Through Austerlitz and Jena, every breast
Crossed with the belt where honour's star doth rest.
Their graspèd bayonets see; behold them here.
They paused an instant, as in wondering fear:
Is opposition dead? They do but see
An empty space before them. Can it be
That England's line is pierced, the battle done?
Who knows not how that moment great was won?
How at our captain's voice from covert sprung
Our fathers, they who all the day had clung
To that contested hill; how, overborne
By one fierce charge, struggling, confounded, torn,
The mighty hostile column paused at last,
Was huddled as a cloud by sudden blast,
And fled? who knows not in a moment more
How all was lost? Our shouting legions pour
Down that all-bloody slope which they had held.
Came Prussia from the wood with guns that knelled

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Vengeance, and pounded into utter rout
Into the deepening night they stagger out:
All lost, Napoleon turned his rein, and fled.
Yet who is victor here? Behold the dead
Rolled on the clammy sod; the victor see—
Death, Death! his form arises solemnly
In that wide reek that labours into air,
As leaves the rout the scene of their despair;
Victors and vanquished leave it, Death remains.
His sulphurous shroud floats from the battle plains,
And in it, thinning toward the darkened stars,
His face smiles downward; many dropping scars
And bloody locks o'erhang its features vast;
Gloating and swollen it dissolved and passed.
Falls weeping night; the smoke of Huguemont
Grows lurid in the dark; then wildly haunt
The hideous scene white flames that slowly creep,
By fearful women borne, from heap to heap.
Some come with knives to butcher them that cry,
Some with death-shriek to faint on them that die.
Far range the hills of death; the weakly moon
Rains ashen light upon the ruin strewn:
The dreadful mounds of relics of the slain,
The headlong horses tumbled down amain,
The limbs that seem to struggle yet, the gleam
On pallid forms, the black mysterious stream
That never came from heaven: there, as by fits
The light falls on them, one in fierceness knits

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His unrelenting brows; some clench their hands
And almost strike again with moveless brands;
Some smile like infants; some their glassy eyes
Appealing lift for ever to the skies:
Ah, Death, thou hast reservèd these to be
Thy true spectators more than those who see.
Put out the torches, ere they fade away
In the cold dawning of another day.
This the last battle; this, O fate! thy due;
Thy victory this, O grave! thy cost, O Waterloo!

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IV.

PEACE.

From that red hour sprang forty years of peace,
While public wrongs diminish, rights increase:
England from loyalty to liberty
Grows up the marvel which the nations praise,
The country of the men who would be free,
 Yet lose no thought of ancient days.

And thou wast ever with us, thy grey head,
O father, known by all, and reverenced;
And thy sage voice at council ever heard,
O Nestor; not with ended war did cease
Thy glory, who didst gain us by thy sword,
 Then teach us how to use, our peace.

The years went by still happier, until
Less frequently the old man's face did fill
The eyes that loved it, and less frequent grew
His step in courts: he died like ripened shock:
Not so had died the crushed at Waterloo,
 Despot and anarch, on his rock.

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We buried him with such a mourning voice
Of our whole state, as made death's regal toys
For once no mockery: the people stared
And wept upon the pageant as it passed;
His withered veterans that last triumph shared,
He led them still unto the last.

We buried him beside the mighty one
Who only watched his glory 'neath the sun,
The Duke of armies by the seaman great;
His glory is like Albion's; 'tis renewed
The same from age to age; its royal seat
On love and strength and fortitude.

His life like England's story—root and fruit—
One growth in many changes; fixed pursuit
Of grandest, widest, difficultest things:
One in diversity—a track of light,
A stream, among the sacred trees that springs,
And issues in the infinite.

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Marlborough: a Historical Ode.

"La patience angélique du génie."

I.

THREE times, great England, thou in arms hast braved
Despots who aimed at universal sway
O'er Europe's field; three times thy might hath saved
The nations when they prostrate lay;
Alone wast thou when countless sails of Spain,
Like storm-clouds from the hidden main,
Clomb the slow winds to ravage thee;
When Toleration, latest child of man,
The modern age, whose story then began,
Were perilled in thy jeopardy.

Alone wast thou when Louis let his hordes
Of polished demons o'er the fainting lands;
The south and centre shrunk beneath their sword,
And held forth supplicating hands:
Alone wast thou when first Napoleon flamed
Mid Alpine wastes before untamed:
When the volcano burst the snow,
And streams of fire displaced the glacial rest,
Old manners passed, old kings were dispossessed:
Alone serene and great wast thou.

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II.

The idea of empire from the Cæsars came;
It haunteth still the earth: by might to reign
On freedom's neck;—this was the Roman's claim;
 This thought inspired Charlemagne.
Miraculous tradition! now it serves
 To grasp the earth with iron nerves,
 To civilize, to cultivate:
Anon, it vaunts not any good to bear,
Its aim confessed to spoil, to crush, to tear,
 Its sinews are but strength and hate.

It bands its hireling armies, it invades
The homes which freedom labours to increase;
Its lying conclaves work in noisome shades,
 Its bloodhounds bay the flocks of peace.
And now the Bourbons, come to royal state,
 The old tradition fulminate;
 Begins their tyranny at home
From Richelieu and more subtle Mazarin,
Then iron arms are stretched the world to win,
 And Paris is the modern Rome.

Louis, third Bourbon, what a work was thine!
To burn the world for carnivals of light,
To slaughter nations that the town might dine;
 Augustus of the world polite!

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Around thee wait thy wondrous valetaille,
Europe is governed by Versailles!
Luxembourg, Catinat, Vendôme,
Bind victory on thy banners, Vauban rings
With forts thy kingdom, dexterous Louvois wings
Thy legions o'er the world to roam.

First to transform the vague mobility
Of Gallic nature into something fixed;
Creator of the France which now we see,
Of weakness and of strength commixed,
Towards foes an armed Meduse with eyes that burn,
While inward poisons slowly turn
To snakes her tresses bright: behold
E'en now she spreads in world-wide victory,
While seeds of revolution secretly
Within her fated form unfold.

Deal forth thy miracles! Almost in vain
Doth William league the nations in thy way,
King of noblesse; yet, hark, the winds complain
O'er tilth and homestead made a prey;
And sees not, while it fawns, thy tinsel train
In purblind alley, filthy lane,
The night-lamps swinging o'er the breath
Of million faces, white and fierce with want?
These shall arise from travail grim and gaunt,
And drive thy race to cursed death.

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For hunger gnaws the land; her children swoon,
Her grass-fed hinds stand weakly 'neath the trees,
While bickering chariot of some mighty one
 Whirls in white dust along the leas.
And tyrannous oppression strikes the right
 Of man in man with cruel blight:
 And most unnatural is grown
The aspect of the time, and fraught with fear,
Hollow submissions, compacts insincere,
 Domestic wrongs still let alone.

Could then thy royal looks so ill discern
The rising signs of that dark working sky,
That thou to foreign wars thy strength must turn,
 Regardless of the evils nigh?
Oh shame of kings, hadst thou no lands to till,
 That thou abroad must spoil and kill?
 Placed in the forehead of that age
Which broke from night with energy divine,
Could then thy royal looks no more design
 Than aggrandisive war to wage?

Yet thou didst fare in triumph, adding still
Province to province, till the century
Which closed with death of William, did fulfil
 Thy haughty mandates utterly;
And saw thy flaming sceptre carried far
 Into receding fields of war;

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Thy tyrannous exactions wrung
From distant realms: thy empire hugely raised;
An empire which the coming age displaced,
And wide its shivered fragments flung.

For thou wast doomed, mature in empiry,
To see thy visioned grandeur flit in air:
Wouldst thou with Albion's flag divide the sea?
La Hogue remands thee to despair:
Or wouldst thou taste the sweets of triumph won?
The eighteenth age is now begun;
And where is thy Turenne? oh, where
Luxembourg, for thy need is sore? Behold
This age brings forth reversal of things old,
And Marlborough rides to rule the war!

III.

Oh, Marlborough, name traduced by little men,
But by the great revered; capacious soul,
'Twas thine o'er warring elements to reign,
And chaos into order roll:
Thine to maintain our great tradition brought
From out the glorious past, and taught
To tyranny in blood and fire:
England's tradition, that no man shall do
Tyrannic deed unchecked; this creed so true
Pass ever on to son from sire!

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Do thou, great England, bid the mists dispart
By slander blown, that hide thy son from thee;
And clasp thy hero closer to thy heart;
Forgive, if aught for pardon be;
So he forgave who stood most injured in
The hero's hesitating sin;
When none discerned where safety lay,
And the grim headsman in the unsettled rage
Of faction, raving through the lawless age,
Awaited him who missed the way.

Yes, he forgave who unto death pursued
The self-same walk, who banded in the path
Of France the nations of the northern blood,
And in mid battle poured their wrath:
No foot stern William found so firm to tread
The devious paths in which he led;
No hand to hold the force allied;
Who best, they asked him, should supply his need;
Who best to counsels and to arms succeed;
He pointed them to thee, and died.

Rise then our hero, lift thy regal front
Above the obscuring dusty cloud; alike
Are grains of dust; their multitude is wont
A cloud upon the eyes to strike:
So hast thou been obscured by atomies
Which whirl their sameness in our eyes:

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'Tis sad to know that once he fell
At mercy of a momentary need;
Yet grant his greatness its eternal meed;
This is our duty, this is well.

IV.

He found our England scorned of Europe's kings,
He left her arbiter of Europe's fate:
An angel's patience and an angel's wings,
As swift to fly, as calm to wait:
A lion's heart; his eyes of lofty sway,
And full of watchful knowledge, play
O'er courts and camps; the varied scene,
Splendid and agitated, owns the grace
Of that wide brow, that most majestic face,
Composed and steadfastly serene.

In stricter league the powers to join, to assuage
Their jealousies by over-mastering tact,
This first his office; then, the war to wage
Like martial music, act on act.
At his command the smouldering war outburns,
Gigantic grown, at once returns
From old Batavia to the banks
Of Danube: lo, that march sublime he heads
O'er which old history still exults; he spreads
Through realms unknown his steady ranks.

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The Schelenburg and Blenheim! Greater name
We write not on our scroll since Agincourt;
Then was the keynote struck of war and fame—
And crushed an army consular:
The music of the faultless battle rung
Through every nation, every tongue;
England had trembled from afar,
Her army gulphed in German forest dim:
The sound of triumph rose, an empire's hymn;
Its splendour rose, a lurid star.

The faultless battle rose, and changed and fell
Beneath thy master hand from side to side
Of that wide field; more subtly changeable
Conflict did hero never guide:
Who knows not how the sidelong wave doth pour
Its bulk upon its space of shore?
So poured thy host successively
Not over subject sands, but bristling fosse
And rampart huge: the rivers wide they cross,
And scale in fire the summits high.

Why do we muse on battles long ago,
Why summon discord from an ancient grave?
It is because a people's life doth grow
Resurgent from the buried brave:
It is because a people's very life
Is only known in deadly strife;

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Because in days of lethargy
Its high resolves from this a people draws—
The grand remembrance of the righteous cause,
And of the rightful victory.

Therefore shall England ever feel the pride
Of those vast triumphs which she shared with thee,
Marlborough, when skill supreme her force did guide,
When wisdom framed her policy:
As often as the wounded victors rose
From the slain bodies of their foes,
So oft by thee prevailed the right;
Thou, only soldier that did never fail,
Thou, sounder of the battle's dreadful scale,
Thou, darter of the thundrous light.

V.

For year by year from thy resistless hands
Some bolt of battle fell until the foe,
From false Bavaria through the Netherlands,
Fled in successive overthrow:
Until the Gallic soil profaned lay
By legions marching on their way
Toward the spoiler's capital;
And Louis in his evil day beheld
His vast ambitions on his head repelled,
And vengeance on the wicked fall.

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Count out the tale of battle, Villeroy,
Boufflers, Vendôme, or Villars; chiefs of fame,
Victors o'er all beside; your victor joy
Pales in disaster at his name.
Sent forth successive to the scene of war,
Ye could not check, ye could not bar:
Count out the tale:—Guard well thy lines,
Oh Villeroy, along the gentle Meuse:
Great cities are thy forts; with mighty thews
Thy army their defence combines.

Behold that army hurled from point to point,
Dashed from defences where they had defied
Our utmost; like a snake torn joint from joint,
And struggling o'er the champaign wide.
Re-form them, and the marsh of Ramillies
Next year thy heavy columns sees
Pressed earthwards in their helpless mass,
Crushed by the cannonade, like herd at bay
Hounded together, bloodily to pay
Their passage from that fell morass.

Thou next, Vendôme; of many a victor day
The wreath hath been thine own; thine utmost now
Thy king demands; thine utmost now essay,
The chief of all his captains thou.
He comes: behold the gathered hosts again
Traversing Holland's watered plain,

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Amid the gentle slopes that guard
The bounds of France; again they join the fray;
The dust of marching men, the smoke-wreaths sway
Above the ring of Oudenarde.

There, circling round and round the Gallic host,
Our squadrons hemmed them still in narrower room;
The combat did but swell when light was lost,
Thick-volleyed flashes pierced the gloom:
That amphitheatre of death appeared
A vast volcano, while careered,
But half illumed, the thund'rous pall,
And the black shapes of war were instant seen:
Fly, Vendôme, fly beneath night's friendly screen,
The shameful rout is past recall.

Shall Lille foreclose the sacred soil of France,
High lifted up upon the midnight sky
Above the clustered fires that still advance,
The trenches opened still more nigh?
Nay, Boufflers; though the assault more carnage shows
Than the red night of Badajos;
Though Vendôme strive the garrison
To succour, hovering round in dyke and fen,
Cold with the coming winter; all in vain;
The mighty frontier fort is won.

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Now, Louis, draw thy latest army round;
"Send Villars," the unconquered; he may show
The vengeful fires that spring from holy ground;
And Villars moves to meet the foe.
Strong his position, mighty his array,
Alas, the dawn is Malplaquet!
Oh victors, Marlborough and Eugene,
Through those wide-shattered ranks may prophet eye
The fair unbounded fields of France descry,
Yea, Paris is defenceless seen.

VI.

Nought shall prevent our hero; quick he forms
His project vast; high glories are in store,
Oh England; Villars' arm nor winter's storms
An instant shall delay the war:—
What?—dares a common hand to interpose,
Ere victor with the vanquished close?
To take thy master from thy head,
Oh patient England, when the hour was near
In which it seemed that all thy toil severe
By such a spoil should be repaid?

Patience of heaven! the tale is old; 'twas so:
Men basely use their greatest even now:
Still works the fool the hero's overthrow,
The ox and ass together plough:

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Home, warrior, home; thy glorious toils resign,
For thankless enemies combine,
As hounds the nobler lion bay:
The passions of the factions so are seethed,
Utrecht shall sell the meed by arms bequeathed,
And tongues thy mighty deeds unsay.

Home, warrior, home; uplift thy awful face,
Time-worn and battle-furrowed, in the rout;
Attest thine innocence in lordly place,
With words pathetic silence doubt:
Give calumny the lie, bid placemen quail,
If virtue may to this prevail;
Then sink with decent majesty;
Gather thy darkness from their wretched light,
Too great with them to wage resentful fight,
And in retirement sternly die.

What comfort may we find save this, that now,
As ever she hath been, was England stayed
Upon her adversary's overthrow;
Content her generous peace she made;
She would not subjugate, she would but strive
Unchecked ambition back to drive;
Then, like her hero, satisfied,
Too proud to exact the utmost and too just
To found dominion on ambitious lust,
In acquiescence calm who died.

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Yet thee, the greatest of that age of men,
Shall earth forget not; nay, she shall require
In after time thy work unfinished, when
 Outflames once more tyrannic fire:
When kingly lust of empire drives the Gaul
 His neighbour nations to enthral,
 When famine wastes the fields of spring,
When Revolution bursts in myriad force;—
In that Red Sea the rider and his horse
 Are cast, and struggle perishing.

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Sir John Franklin.

SIR JOHN FRANKLIN sailed on his last expedition in 1845, with the *Erebus* and *Terror*, vessels which the same year had returned with Sir John Ross from the Antarctic expedition. Government continued the search after Franklin till 1854. Then hope was abandoned, and the Admiralty determined to remove from the Navy List the names of the officers of the *Erebus* and *Terror*, and to consider them as having died in Her Majesty's service. The only vestiges discovered in the later searches were obtained by Rae, who, in his first overland expedition, reported to the Admiralty in 1852, found floating in Parker Bay two pieces of wood, the one with a clasp or band of iron, and the other with two nails in it, bearing the Government mark. They were unquestionably relics from Franklin's vessels, and were the first proof that a North-west Passage existed. In his second expedition, Rae obtained from the Esquimaux the fatal news of the catastrophe of Franklin's crews. The last Government expedition of search returned in 1854: the *Fox*, the private expedition of Lady Franklin, under Captain Mc Clintock, sailed in 1857, and was away three years.

ARGUMENT. *Introduction—The First Winter spent by Franklin in the Arctic Region—The First Spring—Failure and Cessation of the Government Expeditions of Search—The Last Expedition sent by Lady Franklin—The Franklin Relics—Conclusion.*

WHERE the meridians narrow; where the ice
Sets its white teeth against the world, a vice
Which grips the countless islets of the sea,
Northwards we watch; our slackened hands the key

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Of the last problem of the world enfold.
Where the cold northern desert lies unrolled
Beneath the signs that never drink the wave,
A voice is heard, our brethren from their grave
In resurrection, they who sought and found
In life, in death; they tell us that unbound
The mystery lies, the adamantine chain
About the rough fell of the northern main
Is broken now; they tell us all their praise
By silence; silently before our gaze
They rise: they tell us not of death; they died.
Why should they speak of death who have untied
The knot which England strove to loose of old
From those first days when she alone was bold
To emulate the glory on your brows,
Columbus and Da Gama? earth avows
No greater deed; alone did England choose
Those uncouth seas; her sons alone had thews
Sufficient that toward both east and west,
They should attempt the north, whether to wrest
Their doubled passage round the Northern Rock,
Which bars the eastward voyage, and unlock
The sevenfold mouth of Dwina; or to thread
From belt to belt the gulfs and channels led
About the sunken crest of that half-sphere
Which westward greets the Pole: England holds here
The old renown, and still the Vikings ride:
Willoughby died, and Franklin too hath died;

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Chancellor won, and Franklin too hath won.
Come then, and witness where the ice-fields run
To glacier edges upon boundless shores,
Where the moraine runs ruinous, where soars
The monumental berg, her stony folds
The numb and sterile earth with pain upholds
Above the sulky margin of the sea,
Half buried in primæval apathy
By waters washing round her island-limbs,
Half crusted in her frozen scales, while swims
The dull air round her, warped and woofed with snows,
And frost-smoke streaming from her gnashing floes.
Come then, and listen to the solemn voice
Which reaches us so newly o'er the poise
Of earth and water; listen, ere the rush
Of onward time as solemnly shall hush
The voice which speaks in its solemnities;
Ere memory parts, ere time this deed shall prize
As not the latest on his roll of deeds;
And much shall be forgotten which now pleads
With recent sorrow.
By the supreme laws
Of being, in the human heart a cause
Exists, which seeks for ever the unknown:
This still draws close the links mysterious thrown
Between the worlds of matter and of thought;
Still animates the deep relation, fraught

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With subtlest truth, of every outward thing
To the deep soul within the senses' ring.
Now, therefore, they are dearest to our race
Who spring with swiftest foot toward the chase
Of things unknown; and open to our gaze
Another means to grasp the hidden ways
Of that infinitude, which circles round
Our narrow life; another knowledge found
Demands our thanks; now, therefore, we unite
In saddened praise of those whose noble might
Has filled the Elizabethan chart, unrolled
By those who knew God's edicts from of old,
The circumnavigation that should be
By man accomplished: they laboriously
In their outgoings from our silver isle
Strove anciently in ships to reconcile
The face of nature with the thoughts of God,
As man conceives thereof: upon that road
Perished in victory the men we mourn,
Hailing in death creation's latest bourne.
Three lustres have been measured since they passed
From mortal view; the hero soul who cast
His threescore years behind him, and refused
The honours ripely due; and they who cruised
With him of old beyond the icy zone:
They took from hands heroic as their own
The world-famed ships returned from other goal,
From wandering round the starless southern pole,

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The *Erebus*, the *Terror;* and they sailed:
The whalers saw them to an iceberg haled,
Waiting their passage through Lancaster Sound:
And since that day no human eye has found
Those mariners, but they have passed from men.
Fell the first lustre from the summer when
They parted, ere at all their track was gained:
The startled world had sought them, had unchained
Squadrons of rescue, scaled from isle to isle
That archipelago of death, awhile
In hope, but soon with dire inquietude,
For token none appeared, nor sign of good;
Until at length some happy news was found
Of their first winter upon Arctic ground,
And their first summer: this the happier news.
They had passed onward, gallant ships and crews,
And that great heart which harmonized the whole
To its firm purpose, onward, till the roll
Of summer seas was stiffened into death:
Then had they anchored in the isle beneath
North Devon, that shore which stretches stark and rude
Three parts toward the highest latitude;
Long had they struggled in the ice-choked seas,
Steering to gain the northernmost degrees,
That they might issue by the channel named
Of Wellington; until the autumn aimed
His bitter arrows and forbade their path.
The vision deepens now amid the wrath

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Of avalanches, in the very heart
Of desolation; round in every part
Sweep out illusive channels, and the wind
From every quarter bears down scaly rind
Of broken floe and pack, which whirls along
By tempest launched, with tempest fury strong;
And these would rip and rend the thing that dares
Oppose them; while about the coast which stares
With frozen eyes upon the frozen sea,
Are shifted piece by piece incessantly.
The breaking floes, which cling with talons sharp
To desolate headland, cliff, and scar, and scarp,
Above the heaving of the tortured main.
We see those barks, like ghosts that wildly wane,
Flitting from point to point, essaying still
The illusive channels, and with swiftest skill
Foiling the icy grasp; an instant more
And they were crushed 'twixt icy shore and shore:
But as a spirit may survive the strife
Of all the base besetments of a life,
And keep itself serene, and pure and safe,
So they survive, surmounting like the waif
Of those wild waves; so they avoid the close
Of ice which fain would drift them in its throes
Far down the Atlantic: lo, at length they hail
The strand of Beechy, furl the shattered sail,
And rest; their winter appanage lies here.

Therefore, thou desert islet, thou art dear

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For ever to the comrades of the brave;
Upon thy shores they wintered; by the grave
Thrice piled on thee thou 'rt dear; the rescuers found
After five years the relics on thy ground;
On thee the tokens of the sojourn lone
They saw; three monuments of simple stone
To three who died; the ordered mounds for store,
The armoury, the anchor beds, the shore
Traversed by sledge-ruts, and the ruined sites
Of observation, and the secret bights
Where lay the ships; the garden terraces
Of lichens, poppies, and anemones.
Ah, desolate island of the frozen wave,
What dost thou hold? A garden and a grave!
Here then they lay; they saw the winter night
Deepen upon them, as the sun his flight
Into the Scorpion urged; until adown
The unshaded darkness sunk with deeper frown,
Unbroken, till the moon bedewed the vault
With splendid light, Orion made assault
On darkness with his flaming sword; arose
The false Aurora from her long repose,
And vainly spread her wings of phosphor forth
To shroud the unpaling loadstar of the north:
Her splendours sweep through half the stars, they shine
With nebulous lustre, liquid, opaline;
Then burst with purpling anger through the gloom,
And the far-stretching pallid snows illume

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With crimson shadows and with bickering flaws;
A spectral dance, which grows a heavy cause
To simple minds of melancholy dread;
As if the Lapland sorceries had led
Illusion round the pole; that long eclipse
Wrought out weird phantasies; behold where dips
With hissing steam of fire into the sea
Some lurid star; where some discoloured tree
Branches across the zenith, some vast arc
All tremulously spans the purple dark;
Refraction lifts the hummocks into hills;
The fissures gleam like wavy lines of rills
From darkling mountains poured; upon the sight
The illumined vapours glow with fairy light;
The darkness whispers o'er the boundless plain,
Vast sighs, as if some monster in his pain
Rose on uneasy pillow; burst the seams
Of ice with awful crash, and sudden gleams
Of dark and rushing water, which o'erfills
The fissures, till the strong-ribbed crystal thrills;
As if the region terrors strove to shake
The soul of man, brave man! The heart may quake,
The flesh may shrivel, but the will shall wait
Unmoved: God gave man will to conquer fate.
 Then in the month when shines the Northern Crown,
A fickle dawn arises far adown
The southern sky, traversing briefest space
Of heaven, and vanishing without a trace;

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So over chaos when God first made light
Without a sun, the vision flitted bright,
Then died away, and the first day was done.
But morn by morn the promise of the sun
Grows clear; the south is filled with crimson flocks
In place of that grim darkness and its shocks:
Behind the cloud-bars undulates and flows
A subtle radiance; this too clears and grows
To white intensity, and then the shroud
Bursts from the sun-god, and the clammy crowd
Of vapours rustles into golden foam
Before his prow; heaven is again his home.
Ah, then they issued from their cabined sleep,
They watched the thaw pervading through the deep
Beneath a light that sets not: wildly pour
The glacial torrents from the hills that bore
The avalanche; the glistening ice-fields crawl
Like snakes along the tideways; grandly fall
The loosened bergs to welter on their way;
And brightly dance the blue free waves, and play
The thawing monsters; heaves its hoary flakes
The Arctic whale, the solemn walrus makes
Unwieldy mirth, the seal with human eyes
Flaps o'er the fragments; burst a thousand cries
From the wild sea-birds sailing northward all,
The ptarmigan, the eider duck; they call
The little dovekie from his winter watch
Upon the ice to secret haunts, where snatch

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Once more their struggling life those mountain flowers
Which bloom on Arctic wastes or Alpine towers
Alike: sweet crowfoot, hardy saxafrage,
And acid sorrel; these o'ergrow the age
Of hoary headland, and of desolate lea;
Yea, willow and sweet purple bleaberry,
Dwarfed into miniature by ceaseless frost,
These clothe the splintered ledges; they have lost
Their uprightness, along the rocks they trail,
Fearing the icy wind; and thin and pale
Live on for love of all the life that is:
The wavy hair-grass weaves its phantasies
In little circles o'er the reindeer moss.

So scanty is the spring to those who cross
The northern desert; yet that winter lone
And scanty spring were brightest days that shone
For those who died: two direful winters more
They passed, unblessed by any sheltering shore,
Nipped in the ice: strained forth in vain the sail,
The steam-drift did but freeze upon the gale:
The cruel pack still gripped them, still delayed
Nineteen long months, and scarce one mile they made
For every month: then came the bitter end.

And nought was heard, though England still did send
Through summers six her succours; efforts vain
Columbia added; yet the northern main
Hid its dread secret, nought of comfort more;
Though tenderly the seekers did explore

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Coast-line and stream, as brothers tenderly
For brothers dead: England, upon the sea
Thy name is greatest, and 'tis nowhere writ
More grandly than upon the isles which split
The frozen ocean into thousand streams;
For every headland, every channel gleams
With names for ever precious in our story,
E'en from of old, from that first break of glory
Which makes our little island shine a star
Set in the nether heaven: they sought afar,
Yet what was left those seekers now to find?
Death, only death was left by time behind,
Or victory, or death in victory.

And this was ravished from the ghostly sea,
And this one seeker out of many found:
For first in Parker Bay, that western sound
Which joins the clear Pacific, he descried
Those iron-banded timbers which the tide
Was drifting; those torn shreds of oak and pine
Proclaim the guerdon won, the glory thine,
Franklin; for they in western straits were laid;
Wherefore the North-west Passage thou hadst made,
And thine the prize for which our chivalry
Still rode the northern tempests; yea, the sea
Eastward and westward joins a slender hand
O'er the new world; and shattered pole and band
Are hero's lance left shivered in the lists.

Another thing that seeker in the mists

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Of fate had found; the wandering Esquimaux
A spectral band had met long years ago,
As lives are counted;—pallid faces set
Toward the south, gaunt bodies toiling yet
For life; they saw them dragging still the sledge,
Heavy as death, along the rugged edge
Of that vast ice-stream which, with monstrous tread,
An avalanche that fills an ocean's bed,
Crashes its way by shattered floe and floe,
Not swifter than descends the hardened snow
From Alps through ages; lo, they take their way
Toward the Great Fish River, where, they say,
God may send deer to shoot; and all the waste
Shall end, and all the toil and panic haste.

Again those wanderers spake, a tale of dread:
They saw them scattered, famished, frozen, dead,
Upon the snow; their bones were bleaching there,
The snow their shroud, the ice their sepulchre:
Oh victory, and death in victory!

No more did England struggle hopelessly
The dead to gather, since the tale was told;
Enough had perished in the hungry cold.
No more, she cried, my sons shall trust those waves,
Enough have died; their peace be on their graves;
Beneath an ever-rising tomb they lie,
Their deathless star regards them from the sky;
Enough have died; the living to console
Be ours; the dead we seek not: from the roll

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Of living men their names were blotted out;
Yes, further venture had been less devout.

Now, hither, Hope, embracing thy despair;
Now hither, Faith, who through the unseen air
Dost track thy dead as living: give me light
From your deep presence; let me tell aright
The deed of her whom all men celebrate;
Who took the tokens of her husband's fate
With heart unblenching; who, though England stayed,
Stayed not her hands from seeking, but obeyed
The passionate instinct that was sure to find,
Though seeking life no more: ah, too unkind
Had been the years, nor hope of life remained:
She sought to vindicate the fame attained
By such a death, and fully to proclaim,
If it might be, his triumph and the name
Of his achievement. Welcome, was her cry,
That greater word, that life of those who die,
Fame, fame! Well knew she that he was the first
This wondrous century who had traversed
Those hidden chambers: that he lived as one
From whose firm eyes a vision has not gone,
And kept his gaze beyond the hopes and fears
Of common life, and counted out his years
By coasts explored and latitudes attained,
The new Ulysses: death at length had deigned,

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She knew, to lay the crown on such a brow:
'Twas his to make, 'twas hers to prove, his vow.
Ah, lady, worthy thou of her who gave
Her banner to her hero, not to wave
O'er her last bed but o'er his triumph; then
In her first beauty died: thy voice and pen
Stirred England, knit the iron nerve which strove
To gather its own dead; and now for love
Of him and thee, behold, in three years' space
From that first pause of search, another chase
Flits o'er the waters, skirts the grinding pack,
And spends as many years upon the track
As spent the dead: well freighted for thy part,
Oh little bark, with many a lion heart;
For all had given their lives, and some had given
Large grants to speed thy way; well had she striven
For this who sent thee forth, within thy hold
Storing her faith sublime, her prayers untold.
Long time they tarried on their darksome way,
What bring they now? They have returned to-day.

They saw the northern miracles; they cleft
Heart-deep the mystery; their triumph left
Its record on the desert of the scene.

They passed to where the dead alive had been;
Probation held they nigh as long and stern
As slew the dead; therefore they bid us learn
From their own tale how suffered they who died.

They saw the sky turn o'er them, multiplied

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In false horizons, japing moons and suns,
And irised zones, so fair and false at once,
So mocked the very heavens on those who died.
They saw mirage of cold, not heat: how wide
The rainbow-tinted pediments uphold
Ellora, Memphis, or Telmessus old;
So laughed the ready tomb on those who died.
They paled in monstrous night; and they did hide
The pallor of their faces from the sun:
His beams would blind them, glaring forth anon:
So did they pale, and so did shrink, who died.
They split the floes, they took the pack, defied
The toppling icebergs; sheathed in icy drift,
Themselves an iceberg, they did veer and shift
With pain in bitter change of frost and thaw;
Their patient strength the heavy sledge did draw
League after league and month by month around
The iron islet and the frozen sound:
So sailed, so ranged, so laboured they who died.
They shook with famine as they did divide
After the weary march their scanty store:
They shook with cold upon the icy floor,
Where scantly they were hutted from the blast:
Enough; behold how ere the final fast,
How ere th' eternal sleep, they shook who died.
For all was true; they could but pause beside
Those cairns, those sepulchres, which told the tale
That rumour told before; they could but quail

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At sight of that grim ice-stream which had gripped,
Those grisly floes, which at the last had nipped
To death the ships; they could but trace the path
Where the lost feet had stumbled o'er the swath
Of the ribbed ice; they could but weep at thought
Of southern snow-cloud, which had gently caught
The weary ones, and wound them in its pall:
But tears and sweat are frozen ere they fall
With those who seek the dead who died so well.
The bleaching skeleton of one who fell
Beneath Cape Herschel, fallen on his face,
Lies stretched to witness that it was the grace
Of those dead mariners to win the way,
To snatch the secret from the dragon play
Of all the north; a worthy witness he
Of such an enterprise as needs must be
By death fulfilled: they saw him where he lay
In his mute witness through that monstrous day
Whose hours are months; and through that lengthened night
Whose fires avail the sky alone to light,
Not show the earth: he lay as he had died.
And so they bring their relics from the side
Of the gaunt glacier home; we hold them here:
Each shattered fragment England clasps; revere
In these the relics of the dead; behold
In these the trophies of the brave, as old

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And worn they lie amid memorials proud,
With veneration be their worth allowed.
Behold them; there are things of daily need,
Exempt from use how long! No man shall read
Their pathos decent and magnanimous
With unmoved eye; and things that bear for us
A loftier import—take of all the sum;
The books of piety so worn by numb,
Dead hands that prayed; and that discoloured rag
Those hands upbore through all: 'twas England's flag.
And shall their fame be lost? The butterfly
Flitting beneath that Hyperborean sky,
Chilled by the glacial blast, shall sink and spread
Its stiffened wings upon the snow; a bed
Shall soon be scooped; life's dying warmth suffice
To dig the grave for death: anon shall rise
A little mound, that shall as truly lie
To north as any magnet, for the fly
So swayed in death his wings; the traveller
By that small grave his lonely course may steer.
Things perish not in death; a presence grows
From human deeds, which, as the wondrous rose
Of morning turns the wan and wasteful grey
In heaven to glorious warmth, and brings the day
To darksome places; as the boreal light
Flushes the chilly fields of shadeless white;
Doth so transform the realm of the unknown,
That northern waste of spirit, till 'tis grown

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Full of sweet human presence, peopled widely
With memory, thought, and hope; no longer idly
Dissevered from true use: and since to all
That man attains, some failure still must fall,
Nor aught be perfect, happy let us hail
You, noble spirits, who did only fail
In death alone: hail, happy on your bier
Of snow: the spirit rises, falls the tear.

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Havelock's March.

THEY were but a thousand strong; they marched
Through a hundred thousand mutinous foes;
O'er a hundred leagues of desert parched,
Where sunstroke falls, and the Simoon blows:
They were but a thousand strong.

They were but a thousand; fate denied
That more should meet our utter need;
And as they died, the few supplied
Did never make the force exceed
In number a thousand strong.

Many a mile they onward passed
Through swampy grass and field of dall,
By mangoe grove, through jungle vast,
And the squalid huts of the villages small:
They were but a thousand strong.

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And every day they fought the foe,
 And beat him backward many a mile;
Till their name grew bright and terrible, so
 That the brave world everywhere did smile
 With joy at the thousand strong.

And so at last they reached Cawnpore,
 Where the bloody Nana was lying then;
Who stood to try one battle more
 For the possession of his den
 Against but a thousand strong.

And many a gun he laid in train
 To sweep along our serried ranks;
His foot entrenched lay on the plain,
 His horsemen clustered on his flanks
 Against but a thousand strong.

Through reeling heat-mists of the noon
 The tottering force to battle pants,
And sees through the threaded forest soon
 The spectral camels and elephants,
 Where they wait our thousand strong.

They move in life as we draw nigh,
 The gorgeous eastern plumage shakes,
The tulwahs flash, the banners fly,
 At once the imaged battle wakes
 Against but a thousand strong.

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The sowars charged in boiling waves,
Their faces black neath turbans white;
The sepoys plied their guns like slaves
Beneath their bloody tyrant's sight,
Who dreaded a thousand strong.

Their rapid volleys fell like hail;
In copse and tope they make their stand;
In vain, in vain;—they nought avail
When England meets them brand to brand,
And charges, a thousand strong.

On rolled the cloud of the Fusiliers,
The bayonet points gleamed sharp behind,
Like the thunder cloud and the lightning spears,
O'er the deadly open they sped like wind
With the rush of a thousand strong.

The gunner fled from his reeking gun,
The horseman turned his bridle rein;
The cowards feared their coming on,
They shuddered at the pibroch strain,
And the cheer of a thousand strong.

The day was won; but woe the sight
That turned the victor's eye to gloom;
The station in its bloody plight,
The witness of a bloody doom.
Oh, the sobs of a thousand strong!

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They came to seek the living there;
They found the dead all freshly slain,
The shambles foul with blood and hair,
The well which choking corpses stain:
Too late were the thousand strong.

Then wept the iron men who ne'er
Had shrunk from peril of the foe;
While through the night with saddened care
The burial trains with torches go
In sight of the thousand strong.

The dead they buried out of sight,
A vengeful oath they deeply swore;
They manned their ranks, and sternly bright
Wound from the station of Cawnpore
On the march of a thousand strong.

Into the country deep they plunge,
O'er the wide river into Oude,
O'er the thrice-fought field of Busserutgunge
They thrice their desperate path renewed
On the march of a thousand strong.

At length above the level waste
They saw fair Lucknow's towers arise;
Where still was England's lion raised,
Though forty thousand enemies
Awaited a thousand strong.

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They broke their way through the Alumbagh,
And nought withstood their fierce assault;
The Charbagh trembled with the war;
From street to street the banners vault
In the rush of a thousand strong.

Havelock leads them, Outram leads,
True knight and noble general;
Their arm restrains, their bright steel speeds,
Their voice is as the trumpet's call
At the head of a thousand strong.

The goal they sought was far aloof,
Deep pitfalls seamed their narrow road,
Thick poured the shot from wall and roof,
The sun's dread arrows went abroad:
On, on rushed the thousand strong.

Then Neil, the lion-hearted, fell;
No greater name, nor more revered;
But Maude his battering guns plied well,
And still the levelled bayonets cleared
The path of the thousand strong.

'Tis o'er: the straitened garrison
From darksome countermine hath sprung,
From rending bastion, reeking gun;
While sobs, the rescued ones among,
Each man of the thousand strong.

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Ah, who shall tell the meeting when
The glorious deed was all achieved:
English women, babes, and men,
From death and more than death reprieved,—
These greeted the thousand strong.

Havelock, noble dying chief,
Thy triumph and thy grave were here:
Thy triumph swift, thy days were brief;
Cold sunk the hero on his bier,
The chief of a thousand strong.

Refused his feeble frame to blench,
While toil or peril was to do;
The work achieved the flame did quench;
No more sufficed the brave, the true,
The chief of a thousand strong.

They buried him where evermore
His glory might behold his grave;
Who won the crown, the cross who bore;
The oriental trees o'erwave
The chief of a thousand strong.

Havelock, nobler name than thine
Not anywhere does England own:
Patience and virtue both entwine
Thy lowly grave so far and lone,
Great chief of a thousand strong.

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We rear the monumental shrine,
A nation's heart such homage craved ;
But nobler monuments are thine,
The shattered foe, the city saved,
The tears of a thousand strong.

Havelock, nobler name than thine
Doth storied England nowhere own ;
Patience and virtue intertwine
Around thy grave so far and lone,
Chief, chief of a thousand strong.

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Legion.

He had come back from Christ:
His neighbours watched him sitting there
Quiet and clothed; but if perchance
Upon him fell a doubtful glance,
He rose and sat away, or shook
With troubled look.

Beside the door he sat;
The household tasks within were plied;
The Galilean sea and shore
In the deep distance purpled o'er,
Before him rose in prospect wide
At eventide.

The tombs in terraces
Rock-hewn beyond the lake arose;
The creeping waters came more near,
A light mist wrapped the surface clear
Wherein the swine were choked, with those
His demon foes.

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Beyond the water's edge
Gleamed one white lintel of a tomb;
Beneath it yawned a deadly gap
Of shade that did the entrance wrap;
Upon no eye save his might loom
That gleam and gloom.

'Twas there that he had been
When he could take no note of time,
But felt the pressure pant on pant
Of all earth's bars of adamant
About him, nor could leap and climb,
But lay in slime.

The while they kept him cold,
Senseless and dumb and deaf and blind;
Nor tasted he, nor heard, nor smelt,
Nor light nor warmth of nature felt;
For all the fiends had so combined
Against his mind.

'Twas there that first he found
In pain the sense of life, a spark
Of manhood, a resisting spot,
A thought which could aver that not
For ever should his world be dark:
And he did mark

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The wicked work of fiends;
And maniacally struggled then;
And in that little light of dawn
He grew to loathe the hellish spawn,
And ghastly from his lonesome den
Leaped forth on men

A madman by a tomb,
A snake among the rocks he was
To wriggle down the fissures there,
And nakedly to strut and stare,
And spring on whosoe'er should pass,
Though bound with brass.

'Twas there that he had seen
A second self beside him clash
The brazen fetters on him bound,
And laugh and shriek and leap around,
And sharp stones in his own flesh dash,
Pitiless, rash.

Upon that countenance
He saw malicious fiends enact
Their furies, twist a human form
As it had been a tortured worm;
Yell blasphemies through organs racked
In the foul fact.

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'Twas there that he had met
His Healer coming from the ship
After the tempest on the lake:
Though no man there his way might take,
The Twelve were there: he thought to leap
Like wolf on sheep.

All fear surprised him then;
For madness turned to terror there;
Peered horribly his head erect
A moment, and the step he checked
Still held his limbs, and in the air
His strong hands bare

Held out his shattered chains:
A mighty spasm his body tore;
His eyes shot out a bursting glare;
His voice died out, and wide his hair
Flamed upward, ere the damp could soar
From each wide pore.

For what had happened then?
What pang convulsed each furious limb?
Christ spake; and with His voice did pierce
That maddened heart exceeding fierce;
And at the word came forth from him
The Satanim.

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St. Thomas in India.

I STAND alone; the votive crowd is gone
From the wide streets, the courts, the temple door;
And I pursue in thought with wonder flown
Through the closed fane, along the darkened floor,
The horror folded in
By those vast valves, the thing of sin,
The Pagod sitting dark within,
To whom the myriads bow; my demon foe;
To whom each man that might the passage win
Through those fell portals, dancing forth did show
To the wild crowd without, a face
Of leaden hue, a rapturous gaze
In his set eyeballs that did blaze,

And shrieked for fire, or thorny leaves did chew;
Or gnawed a writhing serpent by the tail;
Or upon pointed swords his body threw,
While his black limbs shone with impervious mail
Of rigid muscle; then the fit
Left him, and weak and wild of wit
The shaking creature there did sit.

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So great the power that doth the demon arm ;
And I in vain each day encounter it :
Each day I see again the myriad swarm
Of worshippers all passionate,
Blindly, marvellously elate,
Self-cruel, leaping to their fate.

From provinces and realms afar they come,
Not seeking life but death ; ah, Thou didst stay
The crowds about thy Galilean home
With other comfort in thy holy day,
My Master, when thy hand
The sick man raised and bade him stand,
And demons fled at thy command.
They come, they flow unto this temple vast,
Led on by sorceries, a frantic band,
In brutal transformation, mad, aghast,
Through dust and heat and thirst they pant,
They jape, they dance, they shriek, they rant,
Each man a braying hierophant.

The wrinkled fane receives them with a grin
Of serpent cunning, so it seems to me ;
One after one entranced they pass within
Its jaws enormous of dark sorcery :
And still it waits them, lurking still
In the deep caverns of the hill
In which 'tis hewn by demon skill ;

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Like countless lizard feet its pillars small
Seem almost creeping with an evil will,
Each of them is a mountain's pedestal;
For it has made the mount its lair,
And through the living rock doth wear
Its path malign by vault and stair.

And all the fissured faces of the rocks
Are rough with sculptures wildly intricate
Of hideous gods, wherein are lodged the flocks
Of sacred birds and apes; and round the gate
Burn the cane cressets, hang the swings,
The flesh-hooks and the bloody strings
In which the tortured body swings,
What time the fury reacheth to its height,
And the low throbbing drum incessant sings,
And madding dins the maniac throng excite
To awful rites of blood and lust,
Till in the heat the very dust
Is laid with murderous holocaust.

Ah, how shall it be ended? Wonder grows
To mark the working of the demon's might:
But greater wonder at the sign which shows
This darkness to be swallowed up of light.
Master, I comprehend
Through the deep comfort thou dost send,
The great beginnings of the end:

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For this am I thy feeble instrument;
What boots it now to reason? Thou dost rend
The heavens in working out thine own intent:
Thy beams shall quench the savage flame,
Thy love the savage might shall tame,
This people shall confess thy name.

Yea, I who doubted once may doubt no more,
Albeit I stand alone believing Thee
Of all the millions of this mighty shore;
What I have heard and seen sufficeth me.
I saw thy sacred head among
The swaying waves of Salem's throng,
When Thou didst pass to death along
The steep ascending street: alone wast Thou;
Alone am I; yet 'tis my joyful song
That thou, oh Lord, art with thy servant now:
I cast my life in jeopardy,
I welcome death as victory,
I shall declare thy truth and die.

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Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus.

Jos. I took His Body from the tree,
Wrapped it in linen decently,
And many times I bent my knee
Before I buried him.

Nic. I took of aloes and of myrrh,
That I might aid thee to inter
That Holy Thing in sepulchre;
We were two Nethenim.

Jos. I had a sepulchre of stone,
Wherein afore was buried none:
In this I laid Him all alone;
The stone did many seal.

Nic. I stood afar when in my sight
The crosses rose upon the height,
And fretted with their forms the light
Above the dreadful hill.

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Jos. I am a noble counsellor,
God's kingdom have I waited for,
But was not of the counsel, nor
After the deed of them.

Nic. A ruler of the Jews am I;
And His disciple secretly;
I pleaded that He should not die
Before the Sanhedrim.

Jos. Riches have I in Arimathy,
For it is said in prophecy
That He among the rich should die:
That prophet I fulfil.

Nic. Three years afore I came by night
To visit Him, who did invite
The weary to a burden light,
And all the sick did heal.

Jos. I was within the temple when
He scourged away the throng of men:
It was at the beginning then
Of all His ministry.

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Nic. I learned His doctrine in my mind,
His kingdom, that should be confined
To those of water and of wind
New-born by mystery.

Jos. And I remember and can tell,
When He the temple purged so well,
How many said that Israel
Did now their king possess.

Nic. That king should be, He said to me,
Raised not on throne but on the tree,
As Moses made the serpent be
Raised in the wilderness.

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Merry.

Earth, sad earth, thou roamest
Through the day and night;
Weary with the darkness,
Weary with the light.

Clouds of hanging judgment,
And the cloud that weeps for me,
Swell above the mountain,
Strive above the sea.

But, sad earth, thou knowest
All my love for thee;
Therefore thou dost welcome
The cloud that weeps for me.

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Insciencs.

The wind, like mist of purple grain,
Arises o'er the Arab plain;
Strange constellations flashing soar
Above the dreadful Boreal shore.

But never purple cloud I see
Swelling above immensity;
And never galaxy doth peer
Through the thick mists that wrap me here:
Hard is the way, shut is the gate,
And life is in a narrow strait.
Once only did my soul aspire
To scale the Orient dropping fire;
Once only floated in the ways
Of heaven apart from earthly haze:
And then it was a foolish soul,
And knew not how the heavens do roll.

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The Spirit of the Sphere.

By the sun's irradiate car,
 By the yellow-faced moon;
By the magic of each star,
 We may find thee very soon.

Thou art light and thou art free,
And to live rejoiceth thee
Where the splendours greatest be.

By the flaming zodiac,
 By the cloud that looms with fire,
By the fierce equator's track,
 Thou art found to our desire.

Thou a seraph art to go
All undaunted to and fro
Where the fiercest ardours glow.

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By the butterflies that fold
Little weary wings in sleep,
Ere the moon is made of gold,
We perceive thy presence deep.

Thou an angel art, and well
It sufficeth thee to dwell
In the smallest creature's cell.

By the burnished bèech that spreads
Shining leaves in summer's hour,
By the thistle's dancing heads,
We may see thy lovely power.

Thou a spirit art most sweet,
And to make all life complete
Everywhere thou hast thy seat.

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By the Sea.

In tottering row, like shadows, silently
The old pier-timbers struggle from the sea;
Strained in old storms by those wild waves that creep
So gently now, no longer do they keep
The pier that on them rested long ago,
But stand as driven piles in tottering row.
The sky sails downward, upward creeps the wave,
For countless clouds toward the sun's bright grave
Move curiously with grey and misty wing;
So thickly all the sky environing,
That only by one pale bright spot is known
Where still the sunken light is upward thrown,
And lately sunk the weary king of day:
Still on the sands below in stealthy play
Arise the billows of the nightly tide;
Each with its own clear layer doth override
The spreaded calm where its last brother rolled;
Each upon other rippling draws the fold
Of its thin edge along the soakëd sand,
And stirs the spongy foam 'twixt sea and land,
And lifts the dark waifs higher on the shore.
Yet in this quietness resides the roar
Of ocean floods; one rising of that wind,
And those slow clouds would leave the night behind
In bitter clearness; those cold waves would roll
In snarling billows white. So of the soul.

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Sunset.

A TRACT of light divides on either hand
The darkness of the clouds and of the land,
Low-stretched across the sky, like yellow sand;

Like yellow sand upon the billowy shore;
Of all the sunset there remains no more,
The sand is threatened by the breaker's roar.

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The Birth of Apollo.

The east began to brighten; sweetly grave,
Its grey diffusion rippled like a wave
The dark expectant clouds above the hill,
And severed light from darkness: rising still,
A secret influence moved upon the dark,
A lucid chasm the interval did mark
Between the hill-top fringëd with its trees
And the dark vast above: the bitter breeze
Wrung some sad tears from those soft clouds that hung
Above that chasm, for there they would have clung,
But could not live within the spreading ray,
Which preyed upon them as they moved away.
All else was darkness down the steep hill-side,
All through the valley to the shore beside
Writhing Latona's hermitage of grief:
Scarce one wild gleam could give the sea relief,
Or make the harsh foam whiten on the shore:
But in a little while, as more and more
The dawning grew, her weary eye could see
How in the night the grey clouds stonily

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Had built the vault of heaven; the shaggy slope
Was rolled in forest; and the rays did grope,
Passing o'er midway trees with sleepy heads
And crowning them with fire, amid the beds
Of the wide valley, where cold Night was laid
Deep-drenched with weeping mists that still obeyed
Her fainter wand; but soon all spectral pale
They tossed convulsed, and more and more did fail,
And 'gan to vanish wreathedly away
With hectic hues, wild shapes, and rolling play,
In one dim scene with radiance involved;
And now the splendour all the air dissolved,
The morning overspread the moaning sea.
It was a dawn as sacred as might be
Before some change in nature's ministers,
While shuddered on their seats the ancient peers
Of day and night; a dawn to hail the birth
Of some new wonder in the heavens and earth;
A solemn gathering of older things
Ere transformation; waving of wide wings
Of eyas gods; expectance, doubt, suspense,
Eager surprise, the thrilling of the sense
Of nature's multitudes of all the powers
That rule her awful courts through all her hours.
And lo, where mighty Neptune rises, he
Of dark-green locks, seen on the foamy sea,
Holding his trident and the iron reins
That curb his wallowing steeds through ocean's plains,

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'Tis he who roams the isles; he, who did root
The floating island for Latona's foot:
Now he is gone: and lo, where Iris now
Binds her light fillet upon Typhon's brow,
And vanishes; see Niobe's dear tears
Drop like the rain, and like the gleam appears
Aglaia's smile: all these and many more
Move, like a crowd around an open door,
Coming and going with an eager gaze
About the wonder which its course delays:
It shall delay no more; the accomplishment
Shall give them all to rapture and content;
And in the clouds all-hidden Artemis
Her brother of the golden bow shall kiss.

There lay Latona 'neath the bending tree,
The Eremite of patience, constantly
The watcher of the daybreak, who had seen
Nine morns of travail, lying so between
The reckless sea and shaggy mountain shore:
As many months its load her body bore,
So many days she felt the pang severe;
So that her father in the nether sphere
Of Tartarus, 'neath the all-receiving host,
Hades, had rent with yells the brazen coast,
Labouring with rage to know her torment; he
Cœus the Titan; thus convulsively
The central deep was troubled at the birth.

But gentle forms there were upon the earth,

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Watching the mother; these her sisters mighty,
Dione, Rhea, Themis, Amphitrite,
Who stood around with comforts; yet they four
A look of melancholy foresight wore,
For they were come from Titan husbands pent
Beneath the light in endless 'prisonment,
And who had uttered groaning prophecies,
That now a new usurper should arise
To keep their old dominion in suspense,
And more confine their pallid influence;
Another, from that fated kindred come,
Which gave its life by pitifullest doom
To its displacers: much remorseful blame
Had those grave goddesses before they came,
Because they ever did descend to love
The cruel brotherhood of younger Jove.
And yet not willingly, not willingly
Had they for love foregone their sovereignty,
Not willingly betrayed the older race;
But so was it to be; the old gave place,
Though great and beautiful they were, to new,
Greater, more beautiful; it must ensue
In the world's progress; and the old must yield
And settle them in peace, though many a field
Of Titan battle be remembered still,
And many a groan at present wrong and ill
Shall echo through the caverns of the spheres,
Calling the vacant peace of olden years.

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Ah, woe is me, Dione thought, that e'er
The wanton Cytherea I did bear:
Ah, woe is me, thought Themis, that I bore
The sharp and pinching Fates, and many more
That prey upon the empire old and large:
Ah me, thought Rhea, for I am the marge
From whom the new destruction did begin;
I was the nurse of all that cruel kin,
I rescued them, and for my recompense
They hurled old Saturn from his eminence.
And Amphitrite thought of Neptune's scorn
When first from her rough Triton was new-born,
And drove his mother from the sunny waves
To harbour with old Nereus in his caves.
And now, Latona, that new dynasty
Through thy long travail shall completed be;
Full grandeur shall Olympus soon have won
Joined by the golden aspect of thy son:
All-lone Latona, safe art thou beneath
The Delian palm-tree from the poisonous breath
Of dragon Python by fierce Juno sent
To drive thee through the homeless continent:
And Iris hath the gentle soother brought,
Who waits on birth, whom, full of evil thought,
The cruel Juno kept so long away.
Now shall the hour of birth no more delay,
The birth of him who from his very birth
Was the uniter of the heavens and earth.

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The birth-hour came, and her the birth-pang took ;
And soon the goddess with a mortal look
Beheld her son ; and soon the goddesses
With shrilly cries pressed round her nursing knees,
Beholding him ; yet wonder changed to awe
E'en in those heaven-born, whereas they saw
The wondrous light about each baby limb.
Anon in vestures delicate and trim
They wrap him ; but, behold, the swaddling bands
Held not his swelling heart, with mighty hands
He rends them off, and rising to his feet
Stands forth full-grown in deity complete.
His dreadful arrows rattled at his side,
His lyre was in his hands ; with royal stride
He left them, passing to the continent,
Or soaring skyward with divine ascent,
And joined Olympus ; from his very birth
The great uniter of the heaven and earth.

For he shall be the golden king of day,
And he o'er Lycia and Mœonia
And all the isles shall rule ; and wander far
With golden hymns among the tribes that are
Most wretched without poetry and song.

And many a cavern shall he hold among
The widely severed nations, where shall spring,
Like founts of gloom, the shadows following
The shapes of shafts and columned walls that spread
Into the gathered roof high overhead :

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Where Jove's decrees from out the fragrant fires
The vehement prophet, whom the god inspires,
Shall utter; but none else shall enter there,
None with wrapped mouth and stealthy footstep dare
To pry within, lest madness him consume,
And he die shrieking in the hollow gloom,
Intoxicate with pain; for deity
So quickly vengeful shall none other be.
And he shall sing of beauty wondrously,
That all fair things may learn how fair they be:
And very truth in his deep eye shall pierce,
For he shall know the boundless universe.
And he shall bend his golden arrows keen
Against offence; for by the gods is seen,
And grasped with mighty spiritual hands,
And slain, that evil thing which ever stands
Abstract, impalpable to mortal sense,
Known by its bitterness, and named offence,
Ill, pain, woe, blame, grief, hate, doubt, dread, death, shame:
Ah, we have named it by such other name,
But naming heals not: 'tis a phantom dart,
A ghostly hand that grasps the very heart,
An ice-wind that congeals the very life:
And we avail not in unequal strife;
But the immortal gods with hands of might
Dash the fell phantom from their halls of light;

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And they through him shall aid with gentleness
The wretched race that ever toils to dress
The hollow earth which swallows them at last:
They shall come down upon the broad sea-blast,
Or in the mantling mist, with pity sweet:
Because of him the gods with men shall meet,
And Jove through him to earth shall kinder be.
Thus joyed the earth in that nativity,
Thus heaven received him, from his hour of birth
The great uniter of the heaven and earth.

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XX

Orpheus.

The osprey of the shore resigned her reign
Before the raven of the stricken plain,
And she before the vulture of the hills:
So far had Orpheus travelled: now the rills
More frequent glittered on the guttered clift,
And he arrived the vast Tænarian rift:
Across his path the rapid serpent shot,
The bristling wolf with mouth all panting hot;
And now he stood upon the ruined base
Of Neptune's temple; 'twas an awful place,
Built long ago by men Cyclopian,
Now mouldered into ruin, wasted, wan,
Open to heaven, and beat by every storm.
There on the fragments lay the stony form
Of the great monarch of green waves, beside
A cavern deep, whose mouth his bulk did hide.
Far stretched the desolate landscape from the height;
The nearer valleys hidden were from sight
By many a ridge with dwarfish copses clad;
And from each hollow rising white and sad

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The mist crept up from where the ridges fell
In parallels of ruin toward the dell:
The river with its cold and wandering stream
All suddenly to sink in earth did seem,
Although afar its mazes serpentine
Wound languidly and with pale gleam did shine,
Where through the infirm plain it felt its way:
And on the utmost bound of sight there lay
What seemed the spectre of a city white;
But ah, as even then the wanderer's sight
Took comfort in the thought that men were there,
The cloudy cheat is scattered into air;
And in a moment, lightning-fraught, it sails
Tumultuous on the currents of the gales.

Whence had he come, that wanderer; seeking what,
That lightning answered him? Who knows not that?
Who knows not how among the dead he sought
Eurydice the dead?—With fiery thought,
In answer to that burst of cloudy fire,
He grasps the chords of his compelling lyre,
Draws in his hand, and flings upon the air
The first of that wild burden of despair
Where sorrow, anguish, pain, regret, became
An incantation of fine force to tame
Brute nature, crossing Jove, relentless Fate,
Life to transmute, death to reanimate.
Earth hath no more that magic; sorrow's art
Man long hath lost, though keeping sorrow's heart.

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And, as arose that Orphic strain, began
A wondrous dew to fall around the man,
Seeming an element for harmony,
Which the sweet music summoned from the sky;
Such elemental dew as might contain
The four primævals in its purple grain;
Soft, aqueous-bodied, with ignescent gleams,
Toward earth it flutters and through air it teems:
And as it thickened, the descending flush
Invested all the earth; its ceaseless rush
Hummed resolutely, till uprose a sense
That nought could be impossible from hence
Which music or the soul of love would see;
That wonders from henceforth had power to be,
Nought inconsistent, nought repulsive, nought
Impossible, which man in music sought.
Ah, so it still might be, could sorrow's soul
Commingle with the universal whole:
For then that sorrow, that large human dower,
Which is the best we keep, were made a power
To win us back our heaven: but sorrow's art
Man hath lost long; he keeps but sorrow's heart.

The music prospered, growing stern and strange
With thoughts of great successions, thoughts of change,
Thoughts about moonlit hills where shadows stretch,
About wild fires that chase the panting wretch;
About grim splintered forests on old mounts;
About the sea; about the eternal founts

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Of light and darkness ; Hyperborean tracts ;
Riphœan summits ; Pontic cataracts ;
Concussions strange from inward labours brought
Of mother earth, or ocean overwrought,
Or bursting winds ; when seas have yielded place
To earth, and islands sunk without a trace :
Creation moved in answer to the vast
Emotions of the mind on which 'tis massed.
This was the lore of sorrow ; sorrow's art
Man knows no more, though sorrow break his heart.
Anon the inspired thought did deeper draw
Upon the sources of eternal law ;
And that was bruited on the thrilling strings
Which lies beneath the universe of things,
The unity which is the base of all,
Causing diversity with mystical
Resemblance, which is truth : in each there is
Conscience or self ; the same in all is this ;
This is eternal, this for aye inheres
In trodden clods as in the rolling spheres,
In beasts, in men, in gods ; this makes all one,
Partakers of an awful unison,
Which from an ever-brimming fount of life
Procureth peace in spite of hate and strife,
And harmonizes, since all need must sway
With the essential motion, need must stay
With the eternal rest : nor bitter fate
Can shatter, frustrate, force, nor alienate.

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That argument of sorrow and that art
No more hath man; he hath but sorrow's heart.
But now a mighty moving was begun
About that desert, neath the shadowed sun;
And presently in a fantastic rout
The creatures all enchanted came about;
The rabbit left his burrow; from his mound
The blind mole rolled, and cried upon the ground;
Large herds of deer tossed their convicted heads;
Wild horses circled round; the brakes, the beds
Of silent underwood rustled and spake
In various signs; the sloth was wide awake;
The very serpent left the covert's root,
Advancing his horned head toward the lute;
Her flank the stealthy wild-cat dared confide
Uncovered, by the open forest's side.
But what is this, when with prepared hand
The minstrel smites, as with a tenfold wand,
More mastery, more magic, art than art
More mighty, that hath turned e'en sorrow's heart
To use of life against usurping ill?
What is it that the very heavens doth fill
With sound that doth entrance them like the light
Of speeding suns, whose rippling lustre-flight
Confounds the clouds in glory? Is it now
The tumult of the secret's bubbling flow
Which underlies the awful heart of things,
Solving itself to those melodious strings?

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What is it that so bows the mountain down,
And the great forest rocks from root to crown,
Which bids unthunderous lightnings come and go,
Like breath from the cloud-lips which hover so ?
For now he sings of love ; could he proceed,
And name not love, the inmost spirit's creed,
Who knew the heart of sorrow and the art ?
Therefore behold how heaven and earth dispart
In momentary rhythm, when soul and sense
With blind extreme of ecstasy intense
Blended and interfused, avow things new
Each for the other, each in form and hue :
And all the moving air, with giddiness
Transported into light, doth now impress
A wondrous transformation on the earth :
Vast-shaped shadows issue into birth
At the still speeding of the silent winds,
And overhang with pomp the many kinds
Of fretted forest, mountain, plain, below ;
Far off the land from heaven's rich overflow
Imbibes aërial tints ; far off the light
Strikes into splendour distant glen or height ;
But he, who lifts his keen face neath the vast
And heavy curtains of the sky o'ercast,
While from the chords his daring hand he stays,
Expects the consummation of amaze,
The sorrowing marvel of the solved skies.
A cold wind passes ; and fierce shocks surprise

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Those slow sublimities; a radiant flood
Of light supernal bursts o'er hill and wood,
And smites the eyeballs of that lifted face.
Now might he gain the heaven, now might raise
Himself on pinions of eternal youth;
The latitude, the amplitude of truth
He might for ever now achieve, made nigh
To those serener regions of the sky
Above all change, where no time-cloud doth sail,
But an eternal zephyr waves the veil
Of changeless azure, and earth's days return
Like a faint blush below; ah, he might learn
Eternal joy and stillness. Shall he so?
Far other destiny doth Love bestow
Upon the children whom he honours most:
For at that mighty moment, when the coast
Of heaven he might in ecstasy attain,
Yawns the dread cave wherein the dead remain;
The sea-god's statue, like a giant bole
Uprooted, leaps from out the charnel-hole;
And Love, the exalter, is the summoner
To places all with writhing shades astir;
A peal of groans comes ringing on his ear,
And the distressful furrows toss with fear,
And he descends; whom not all sorrow's art
Could ransom from the pangs of sorrow's heart.

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To Summer.

Thou who dost set the prop to crooked arms
 Of apple-trees that labour with their store;
Who givest sunshine to the nestling farms
 Along the valley, that their roofs may pore
More placidly upon the open sky;
Thou who dost bid the poplars swing so high
 Through thy sweet breath, and pourest rustling waves
Of air along the forest-fledged hill;
 Who by the shore dost froth the ocean caves
With green translucent billows, coming still
Till the clear reefs and hollows sob and thrill;
 Imperial summer, thou art nigh;
 Giver of sweetness, thou art come;
Magician of the soul's melodious gloom,
Whisperer of heaven, great queen of poesy.

I see thee lead the weeping morning up,
 That thy bright sun may kiss away her tears;
I see thee drench thy moon in dewy cup,
 Which from the roses Hebe evening bears;

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High in the heaven is set thy smouldering tower
Of cloudy watch for many a noontide hour;
Whence thou descendest on the misty vale
Far off, and in green hollows all thine own
Leanest thy brow, for loving languor pale,
While some sweet lay of love is let alone,
Or some sweet whisper dies away unknown:
Then with the sunset thou dost rise,
And mournfully dost mark
Thy softening clouds subdued into the dark,
The shutting of thy flowers, and thy bereaved skies.

Yet thou must fade, sweet nurse of budded boughs;
Thy beauty hath the tenderness of death;
Thy fickle sun is riding from thine house;
Thy perfect fulness waits for withering breath:
Already, see, the broad-leaved sycamore
Drops one by one his honours to the floor:
For his wide mouths thou canst no longer find,
Poor mother that thou art, the needful food;
The air doth less abound with nectar kind;
And soon his brethren of the prosperous wood
Shall paler grow; thou shalt be sallow-hued,
Mother, too soon; dies too
The aspiration thou hast sent,
The thrilling joy, the sweet content
That live with trees so green and heavens so blue.

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Ode on Departing Youth.

His icicle upon the frozen bough
Stern winter hangs, where hung the leaf ere now:
In soft diffusion doth the morning creep
Along the clouded heaven from mound to mound,
So faint and wan, the woods are still asleep,
And pallid shadows scarcely mark the ground.

Then comes the thought, Alas that summer dies;
Alas that youth should melancholy grow
In waning hours, and lose the alchemies
That make its thickest clouds with gold to glow!

But what hast thou to do,
Whose soul is strong, with time? What cause hast thou
To watch the flitting years leave bare the bough
Of life's fair tree, as yonder bough is left
Unhonoured and bereft
To wave unheeded in the ashen sky:
Stern spirit, thou canst feel
Eternal pinions grow with nerves of steel

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To wing thee on thy flight;
And eyes of vision true
And resolutely bright
To aid thee in the track thou must pursue
With instinct sure and expectation high.

So rather in the dubious years which part
Manhood from youth, reflects the very heart
How small the loss that perished with the time
That was its prime.
What has been lost save hopes and fears
That shook tumultuary spears
Beside the desolate fount of tears?
What has been lost save beating ears
That sought for praise in all the tides of air,
And thrust upon the trembling heart despair,
Because they gathered coldness, scoff, and scorn;
Save sorrow desperately forlorn:
What, save vain thoughts that strove in trembling doubt
To wander all the universe about,
The woods, the fields; and in an airy ring
To compass everything?
But now 'tis sweet to know that whatsoe'er
The lot may be the cold stars bid thee share,
One ember plucked from dying youth
Shall ever burn, and that is—Noble Truth.
Unto the soul that upward still hath striven
Shall Noble Truth reveal herself from heaven:

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This shall survive and be a living shoot
From which the dead earth falls, and glorious fruit
Shall spring from this: and still thou mayst behold
How divine substance lieth underneath
The many forms of life, the dust of death:
And Poetry, that wondrous thing, doth mould
Itself around the meanest thing that is;
Clinging, like music in an echoing cave,
Round what were dismal else; with equal kiss
Touching the gilded tyrant and his slave.

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Sympathy; an Ode.

Wild are the dreams of youth,
While all is yet unknown;
The bitterness, the ruth
With which the world doth groan;
The cares that weigh like stone,
And fretful pangs uncouth.

Then all is changed; behold
The gloomy fiend, the minister of ill,
Who haunteth human life
In shapes as manifold
As there are joys, or promises of joy;
Who hath as many stings wherewith to kill
As there are happy creatures to destroy.
And hath he power to wound
That concord with his strife,
That harmony, that confidence
In which divinest youth is lapped; to chill
That exultation fine,
That rapture of the sense?
With sweat of agony

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To bow that forehead to the ground
Which should be lifted to the gentle air,
And bathed in nature's soft serenity;
Serenity divine
Of influences fair?

Yes, even so it is:
Despondency and fear
Can limit all the scope, curtail the bliss:
Or bitter care to dross
Can turn each golden year;
Or penury makes bare
Her lean and threatening arm,
Turning with surest pangs all gain to loss;
Like a dissolving charm,
That leaves a wretch forlorn
In some foul sorceress' bosom lying
Whom he had deemed most fair;
With spasm the wretch is dying;
His dream did not his life outlast;
The while a palsy wind
Shakes the green wood behind.

And yet life's visionary part may be
Preserved, O Sympathy, by thee:
Sweet goddess, gentle child
Of heaven, sister of love,
Distilling in the spirit

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Thine own sweet manna from above
Rare and mild:
Dispelling by thy power
The fiends that darkly lower
O'er the chaotic scene of human strife;
The fiends that did from curses old inherit
The power to make the earth unearthly,
And gender phantoms of vacuity
Upon the hideous semblances of life.

What, if the sea far off
Do make its endless moan;
What, if the forest free
Do wail alone;
And the white clouds soar
Untraced in heaven from the horizon shore?
What, if all nature's mystery
Ear cannot hear, eye cannot see,
While men with mutual scoff,
Tortured and torturing, wage
From broken youth to hideous age,
A hellish war on one another's peace?
No reed that's shaken with the wind need we
Go out to see;
Nor lean an aching ear upon the shore
To listen for the ocean's roar:
Nay, should the havoc and the strife increase,
And drag us downward to the core

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Of the foul battle, thou, oh Goddess, thou,
Divinest Sympathy, canst evermore
Send grand remembrance to the brow
Of shapes long worshipped in the green
Poetic world, and evermore
Send whispers of the glories all unseen,
So that the common walks of life do soar
Into wide haunted grot, and dim receding shore.

And deep the meaning thou canst show
In that which seemeth sad and base;
More tragic then if pompous: see
The squalid crowd that lines yon alley low:
Irradiate by thy light, oh Sympathy,
They're spirits than Prometheus grander,
Furies more awful than Tisiphone;
And mightier issues in their pale looks glow
Than ever were in fable read;
While gaunt and fierce they wander
Along the dingy street for daily bread.

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Sorrow: a Sonnet.

THROUGH pity for the world I scarcely feel
Great poetry to have a charm for me:
From thought am I called off by crowds that reel
Along the frozen streets in penury:
The infant with its soft and chilly hands
Seeks nourishment amid dishonouring rags;
The pauper man in desolation stands:—
And this increases so, the soul it drags
From meditating in the fair domain
Of all the glorious past of thought and man.
My heart is down; my pinions strive in vain;
Great poetry not now their plumes will fan.
Ah, who can glory in poetic pages,
Where life with want its bitter battle wages?

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The Human Destiny: a Sonnet.

As run the rivers on through shade and sun,
 As flow the hours of time through day and night,
As through her swelling year the earth rolls on,
 Each part in alternation dark and light:
So rolls and flows with more prodigious change
 The human destiny; in gloom profound
And horror of great darkness, or made strange
 By sudden light that shines from heaven around:
Now in it works a fate inopportune,
 Deadly, malicious; now the mortal scene
Smiles comforted with some eternal boon,
 And blood is turned to dew of roseate sheen:
But whether weal or woe, life onward flows:
Whither, oh, whither? Not an angel knows.

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Humanity: a Sonnet.

There is a soul above the soul of each,
A mightier soul, which yet to each belongs:
There is a sound made of all human speech,
And numerous as the concourse of all songs:
And in that soul lives each, in each that soul,
Though all the ages are its lifetime vast;
Each soul that dies, in its most sacred whole
Receiveth life that shall for ever last.
And thus for ever with a wider span
Humanity o'erarches time and death;
Man can elect the universal man,
And live in life that ends not with his breath,
And gather glory that increaseth still
Till Time his glass with Death's last dust shall fill.

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Death.

I GRIEVE not at the thought of pain,
I wear no eye of gloom,
Though with the halting funeral train
I stand beside the tomb;
And in the fading of earth's light
My torch becomes a plume.

Besides the perished form do I
Preserving balms inter;
I burn the costly spicery
Of rosemary and myrrh;
I bind about my happy brow
The ever-during fir.

Upon the hillock of the grave
I plant the living sod;
Each atom of earth's dust I save
To be returned to God:
There is an angel great and dread
In each revered clod.

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The Warrior.

Warriors camp,
Horses champ,
Deep battalions onward tramp;
And the war
From afar
Gathers under lurid star.

Rolled and marshalled it shall be
Into battle's mystery;
Rank on serried rank shall press,
Dauntless, ceaseless, numberless.

All around
Shall the sound
Of the furious strokes rebound;
Far away
O'er the fray
Shall the sword in lightning play:

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And the battle's dusty veil
Mingled with the cloud shall sail,
And the bleeding warrior must
Make his shroud of battle dust.

Far afield
Shall my shield
Flame behind the sword I wield:
Few shall stand
Where the brand
Smiteth in my heavy hand.

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Concealment: the Story of a Gentleman of Dauphiny.*

A LOVE too much concealed, too little known,
May lead but to the grave; as ye shall own
Who con with me this simple history.
There lived within the bounds of Dauphiny
In ancient times a noble gentleman,
Whose fair renown through all the country ran
For gentle valour and sweet courtesy:
But though renowned, alas, not rich was he.
This gentleman long loved a demoiselle
Of wondrous beauty, whom they named La Belle;
She was of lordly house and high estate;
And he, albeit his passion was so great,
Too modestly did love to wish that she
Should ever match below her own degree:
He loved because she was most loveable,
But sought her not, not understanding well

* The original of this story is found in *Contes et Nouvelles de Margarette de Valois Reine de Navarre.*

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That love has right above both house and wealth:
Wherefore he never sought by shifty stealth,
As do poor lovers, for her favour high;
But if by any chance he should be nigh,
Then in her presence would he keep and smile,
And let deep love consume his heart the while.
And so long time he fared, until at last,
I know not how, his passion overpast
The strictness of the tone and look he wore;
And she, who never had been loved before,
So tender young she was, a flower in bud,
Discerned, and on the sudden understood:
And glad she was in simple faith to be
Beloved so nobly and so honestly;
Nought knowing of the dreadful train of love,
But joyful that she might another move,
As him she moved, with rapture and delight,
Only by living in her lover's sight.
So now more oft he came, nor sought to hide
His love, though words to it he still denied.
But who in love can be unnoted?—Soon
The world began to whisper, and anon
The whisper rose into a louder hum;
And lastly to the countess did it come,
The mother countess: she, a widow left
With that one child, La Belle, was not bereft
Of pity for a lover; but respect
For the world's mandates that soft pity checked.

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Too long had she by virtuous maxims kept
Virtue to know, if virtue overstept
Its own precinct: a keeper of the door
Not far did she the temple wide explore,
The fane which love for deity doth own,
Creation's centre, being's very throne;
To which the very entrance none can find
Without refinement of the sense and mind,
While to its centre earthly visitant
May never pierce, for there for ever pant
Love's spiritual fires through endless days,
And in that noon joy's shadow falls both ways.
Such is the court, the universe of love,
So far its inmost shrine our hopes above.
But faithful souls, like voyagers, behold
The far-off glory as a dawn of gold,
The supreme glory shedding constant beams,
Which thread the opal spheres in softer gleams,
And softer, that Love's voyagers may know
The wonders of the way by which they go.
They see Love's planets, like the lamps of night,
Set in their spheres of softness and delight:
Or if it be a fane that is most fit
To image forth the throne where Love doth sit
In sacredness, they see the pillars rise
Of shafted constancy towards the skies
In that world-temple; widely rolls between
The unfathomed basement and the vault serene

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The incense cloud of an eternal fitness,
Of which fair dreams are minister and witness;
And its foundations are unwritten faith,
Truer than covenant, stronger than death,
More gleaming than a rock of chrysophrase.
These marvels may he see who keeps the ways
Of love through life, and countless marvels more:
But who the blinded vision may restore
Of those who cease to love, nor honour love
In his true worshippers; what herald dove
Swathes with white plume and flashing Iris-gleam
The hapless soul that has forgot to dream?
The mother bade that lover keep away
From his beloved, lest the world should say
Some venomed thing; and he her words obeyed,
And for long months away from her he stayed,
Till the world's bruit had ceased; nor did he wear
A brow of sadness, but did still repair
To all his haunts, and busily he strove:
But as his absence grew, so grew his love.
 So passed the time, until, as it befel,
Another lover came to woo La Bélle,
Not so much richer than this gentleman,
Nor of such name; and soon the rumour ran
That they should wed: this when our lover heard,
"It is but ill that he should be preferred,"
Thought he, "to me, who have so truly loved;
I tarried not for this; I am removed

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By one less worth than me; nay, who can tell
If in her secret mind she love me well?
Then am I much to blame that from neglect
I have let go her service, and have checked
Her shamefaced thought: I will return and see
If there be any hope reserved for me."

From the pine-bearing height on which he dwelt
He took his way, and sweet enchantment felt
To go to her once more; he knew the way
Full well, and followed it for half the day,
Until her pleasant mansion came in sight
Amid the poplars; and he did alight,
With wild expectance poised in balance fine.

Now hath he for the poplar changed the pine;
Those ladies in their little garden ground,
The mother countess and La Belle, he found;
Grey walls the place confined, yellow with moss,
And with trained fruit-trees burgeoned, and across
Went gravel walks amid the greenest sward,
And many pointed cypresses on guard
Lifted their darker spires; amidst there was
A marble fountain rising in the grass.

And there that lover entered and beheld
Those ladies walking; toward them he impelled
His hasty feet, and said at once whate'er
He did before within his mind prepare.
Ah, wherefore had he never told before
The secret which so long his bosom bore?

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Ah, what avails it all the tale to tell
Of love that at one touch in sorrow fell;
Why utter now the words which told him all
Befallen which he deemed could not befal,
His own love being such; why speak again
The words that he shall still revolve in pain
For many months, still muttering like a charm
Of ill the syllables that wrought him harm?
What said the countess, and what said La Belle?
Enough to know that love in ruins fell,
Love's eloquence was quenched; too late afield
Was love; and, having lain so long concealed,
Put forth its pennons vainly now at last.
He found La Belle by plighted faith bound fast,
But not to him, and married soon to be;
And there was deprecation; sophistry
Of comfort; rapid words which ever strove
To make the whole a commonplace of love
Soon to be ended: then said he, "Adieu,
None other shall I ever love than you."
Now hath he changed the poplar for the pine.
Full slowly rode he home through shade and shine,
Along the valley, o'er the rising ridge,
And past the hollow roaring by the bridge,
And by the torrent rushing from the steep:
The rain-cloud rode above him; out did sweep
The rainbow, where cold rain at distance fell;
And faded as some autumn cloud did swell

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In purple o'er the sun behind his back.
So dizzily he gained the homeward track,
And entered wearily among the pines:
His kennelled hounds with cries and lengthened whines
At his appearance leaped their length of chain:
"Farewell," said he, "my dogs, ye call in vain."
And in the pain of that refusal he
Could take no rest, but ever listlessly
Roamed up and down the flinty mountain path;
Until at length by small degrees he hath
Begun to fall away; and in such sort
Was changed, that those who saw him did report
His death at hand; nay, death itself they said
Was painted in his visage: now his bed
He kept, and any moment he might die.
A certain man soon brought this public cry
Unto the countess, and much urged that she,
As she was charitable, should go see
The dying man, and take with her La Belle;
With him they went, who guided them full well.
They climbed the mountain by the flinty way
Which led above the pines; the dogs did bay,
As they went past, the dogs that soon should be
Masterless; and from out the dark green tree
The pheasant whirred; anon the latch they lift
And stand within the chamber; his last shrift
The dying man had made, and had received
Communion, and, that holy task achieved,

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Expected nought to see or hear again;
He was so meagre that it was a pain
To recognize him: a most pallid green
O'erspread his visage, and the Rood between
His strained hands lay; but as on them he gazed,
His force so much returned that he half raised
His body, and the countess thus addressed.
"Ah, madam, thou art come to lay at rest
A man who deemed himself already gone,
Whom you have slain; ah, this is rightly done;
How come you here?" Then she—"Nay, say not so;
Nay, what a sight is here, and what a woe;
Nay, say not we have slain whom overmuch
We ever loved."—"Madam," said he, "Death's clutch
Is on me; let me say I have concealed,
All that I might, my state; 'tis now revealed;
So is the love I bear your daughter dear,
Whom ever I have served with mind sincere;
But all my hope I lost through haplessness;
Yet now I speak not of mine own distress,
Which grieves me now no more, but I lament
For her, that she hath lost the man content
Above all men to love and serve her well:
For I am sure, while she on earth may dwell,
She ne'er shall meet with one to love her so.
But I must leave her, I away must go
And leave her in the world, and it is this
That irks me more than all the good I miss,

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For I desired never to preserve
My wretched life, but that I might her serve,
And I may perish now that hope is dead."
All this they wept to hear, and then thus said
The countess: "Courage, my beloved friend,
For here I swear, if heaven thy life defend,
La Belle shall never wed but only thee;
Here she is present, and doth well agree."
But hope in that dead soul grew not again,
And he replied, "Lady, if that so vain
And bootless solace but three months agone
Had been bestowed, I should have been the one
Most vigorous and happy in all France."
But as that promise still they did advance,
At last he said, "Since ye so kindly seem,
One thing I ask which never did I deem
Myself so hardy as to think;" and they
That he should confidently ask did pray.
Then he, "Let me but hold awhile the head
Of her whom here you proffer me to wed,
Within my arms." La Belle was sore afraid
At that request, but straight her mother bade
Do as he said, perceiving death to be
So fixed upon his countenance that he
Was scarce a man: and toward the bed she went
And knelt beside it; he was nearly spent,
But soon he roused himself, and 'gan to stretch
His thin arms round her, and her face to fetch

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To his pale face: "Now have I all that e'er
In all my life to hope for I did dare:
For how that I have loved thee utterly
With gentle faith and perfect honesty,
God knows; and now right willingly I die:
God who is Love and Perfect Charity
Knows I lie not; and I am ready now
For my Creator." Here he back did bow,
Yet rallied once again toward her face,
And with such fervour struggled to embrace,
That in the very strife a corpse he lay.

Now he was nobly buried, as they say,
For many a lover came from fair Provence
To follow in the train; and through all France
They sang of him; but if his wandering ghost
Could feel a triumph on the gloomy coast
Of silent darkness, at those obsequies
Its greatest triumph was the tears and cries
Of that poor demoiselle for whom he died:
For scarce could she be severed from his side
When earth received him; and through all her days,
In champaign green or sought by lover's praise,
Remembered his lost image, full of pain,
Nor ever after that funereal train
Of veritable joy did taste again.

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X

Perversity: the Story of Ermolai.

It is the time to tell of fatal love;
Though all the woods are vocal with the dove,
The nodding chesnut sees the white clouds build
In summer skies; and all the air is filled
With lightsome fragrance from the flowering lime,
And toward the low-hung boughs the thickets climb:
It is the time to tell of fatal love.
For were the woods not vocal with the dove,
And bluest skies gave light through heart and mind,
When Ermolai through forest paths did wind
To see his lady Columbe joyfully?
A goodly knight he was; you could not see
A man more gaily strong, nor sight more fair
Than his white horse, steel arms, and yellow hair,
As he rode onward all the afternoon:
And when in clearest ether hung the moon,
His courser paced along the darkening lake
O'er which fair Columbe's castle lights 'gan shake.
She was a lady of most high degree,
The daughter of Duke Ebenhard, and he

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A councillor unto the emperor:
But her blue eyes and pearly features wore
Such gentleness, that whoso saw her, straight
Forgot for love her birth and high estate.
And she has welcomed her brave lover now
From balcony, while in the yard below
His steed upon the stones was clattering,
And he both eyes and heart did upward fling.
And now they both together sit at board,
Fronting the fiery eyes of Ebenhard;
Where too sat Columbe's foster sister dear,
Alice the fair; with shortness ye shall hear
That her wild eyes and wondrous looks have caught
Knight Ermolai, and such enchantment wrought,
That now he drew with pain to Columbe sweet
His erring eyes, and painfully did greet
Her words of love, when lovingly she spake.
All night upon his bed he lay awake,
And tossed and muttered; all the night he had
Her mighty beauty in his vision sad,
As he were haunted; sure the fiend had wrought
Some wicked spell on him to change his thought.
Then when the dawn came through his window grey,
He took his sword and gown, and made his way
To Strepan's chamber, whom asleep he found—
Strepan his varlet, cunning as a hound
To track vagaries by the fancy bred.
"Strepan," he cried, standing beside his bed,

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"No wretch was ever so undone as I;
For came I not 'neath yester even's sky
Loving fair Columbe?—ah, I love her still;
But conqueror love hath wrought me bitter ill,
For now I love all madly Alice fair."

Then Strepan answered, trembling, "Sir, beware
The wrath of her high sire, duke Ebenhard;
No duke so fiery, rigorous, and hard:
Sure this is but a moment's phantasy,
For think that Columbe is thy bride to be."

"Silence," said Ermolai, "I fear not aught
His anger; neither do I set at nought
Sweet Columbe; no, by heaven, this sword should slay
The man who would her beauty dear unsay;
To die for her were easy, but to live—
Ah, love hath other law, ah love doth give
Other command; I tell thee, some control
Beyond e'en life is laid upon my soul:
For can the gentle moon with all her light
The sun-flower turn? Nay, never star of night
Can move the buds that open with the sun:
So 'tis in love; the soul obeys but one:
But wherefore preach I?—rather by the oath
Of Love himself I plight no other troth
Than to this Alice, whom I wholly love;
Wherefore must thou thy skill most shortly prove,
Devising how we may together flee
Home to my castle, married there to be."

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"Grant me three days," quoth crafty Strepan here,
"Since thou art lunatic, my thoughts to clear."
"Granted," said Ermolai, "but have a care
Thou fail me not; and yet, alas, I swear
That Columbe is the sweetest, the most fair
Of all beside: ah, Columbe, whatsoe'er
Thou shalt hereafter think of me, I trow
If thou the pangs that now I feel couldst know,
Thou wouldst forgive me all, oh sweetest, best."
With that so sore a passion him oppressed
That we must pity him; there is no pain
Like dying love; for to the altered brain
The unaltered heart still sends its rich supplies;
But some usurper strange now occupies
The old receptacle within the mind
Where the poor heart its harbour used to find
For all the pulsive tides of love that wont
To have their issue from its sacred font.
An image new hath entered through the sense,
And a new form must make impression thence
Upon the cordial substance still so warm
With the impression of the older form.
So wills imperial fancy, and in vain
The heart doth beat with penitential pain,
In vain resists, and from its arteries
Withdraws the genial current, and denies
That newer love the ancient form efface;
In vain returns it to its ancient place,

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And righteously refuseth to transmit
Its vital current to the cruel wit:
In vain is this; the heart must beat again
Through all reluctance of repentant pain;
In none the heart and mind are long apart;
Imperial fancy overrules the heart.
Yet this is full of pain to whomsoe'er
It happens; and inconstancy must bear
This righteous pain; nor this alone, for now
The ancient habit more afflicts the brow
Than the new joy rewards; perish anon,
When the attractive force of thought is gone,
The outward pomps of love, the imageries
Of beauty, by the sensibilities
Invested with sweet power, the atmosphere
Circling the lover; fades the face of her
Beloved but lately, fades the pleasant land
In which but now he wandered fragrance-fanned,
Waited by rosy clouds of happy pride,
Sweet interests, warbling shapes, and pageants wide:
It is for him no more; he is shut out
From Eden by default, and all about
The blessed region walks he hand in hand
With gravest Memory; but he is banned,
A wretch forlorn, whom no new love beguiles
With all the happiness of older smiles.
Ah, this is pain; no divine influence
Can ebb away, and leave an easy sense;

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No heart can throb and cast rejected tide
Toward fancy's airy bourne, but there must ride
On each returning wave some bitter pain.
The three days past, his course hath Strepan ta'en
Toward a neighbouring mound, whereon was piled
Great store of faggots, meant as signal wild
Of some fierce enemy approaching near:
The heap he fired at midnight dark and drear,
In stormy sky arose the balefire's light,
Anon the courtyard swarmed with serf and knight,
And forth they rushed in nightly cavalcade
To meet the fancied foe in woodland shade.
So when the wrathful duke and all his men
Were far away, the running Strepan then
Led round a mighty horse from Barbary
And Ermolai's white charger, and they flee,
Alice and Ermolai, and very soon
Was Ermolai watching the half-wrecked moon
In cloudy waves from his own lattice high,
While his own mother trembling faltered nigh
Holding his out-flung hand, and in the room
Fair Alice crouched and sobbed amid the gloom:
"Good night," at last said he, "full tenderly
My gentle bird in cage shall tended be:
Gently, my mother, keep her blessed head,
'Tis but a little time and we shall wed."
Few days were past before the wrathful duke
With many mustered knights his journey took

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Of vengeance to the garde of Ermolai;
But ere they yet were marching on their way,
Sweet Columbe, left deserted, left alone,
Called on whom she could trust, who straight is gone
Before the host with messages from her:
She sent a napkin wet with many a tear,
A jewel, too, she sent in gold enset,
And poisoned 'twas; thus did she legend it:
"Alice, receive this napkin; 'tis thy due;
Wet with my tears, which not another drew;
Receive this poisoned ring; and unto me
If thou be false, let this be death to thee;
But if thou wilt repent, return before
The wrathful duke shall slay my love in war;
And straight I will forgive thee; but if still
Thy purpose holds to have thy wicked will,
I charge thee, send the poison back to me."
Thus having said, she sunk down utterly
Dissolved in pain upon the marble floor,
And there she lay, while past the yawning door
The martial knights strode forth in fierce array;
None knew how long in deadly swoon she lay.
How did fair Alice take those tokens sad?
Her eyes did beam within most piteous-glad,
The napkin at her bosom's core she dried,
The poisoned ring she took, and straightway hied
Down the black staircase into the wide hall,
Where Ermolai beneath the banners tall

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After the nightly banquet slumbered now
Upon the table; trouble marked his brow,
And ruffled hair, in which his hands were thrust:
That lady tottered toward him, for she must
Breathe one kiss o'er him ere she leave him there;
Yet never stirred the sleeper unaware,
And she through hall and corridor hath ranged,
Her mighty beauty broken not, but changed;
So left she him, and is to Columbe fled:
"Sister, behold thy poisoned ring," she said,
"And take again thy love." No more she could,
But in sharp sorrow broke her womanhood:
And Columbe kissed her, and they two abode
As if fate never made on faith inroad.
Meanwhile the host of Ebenhard drew near
And sieged the castle; first a messenger
They sent to seek if Alice therein lay:
This Ermolai distracted answered, Yea.
Then they the place assaulted, and the knight
With followers few resisted all he might,
Till they have gained the wall with joyous shout,
And Ermolai half-dead with wounds drawn out.
They sought for Alice all about the ground,
In much amaze when nowhere she was found,
And many a curse upon the knight they laid,
Deeming that she was foully murdered.
The wrathful duke gave sentence that the knight,
As one who had to honour done despite,

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Should on a cart be drawn to market square,
And lose his head: him now the varlets bear
To dungeon deep, enshackled heavily.
Now when fair Alice heard the public cry
That Ermolai should perish in this sort,
Unto the emperor she did resort,
And did entreat him of his clemency
To spare that knight, for that no felony
By him had been committed; and she won
From that great king her prayer; but thereupon
Was this condition added, that he wed
Columbe the fair, or else not save his head,
If he refused; or if Columbe no more
Would of his love, it should be as before;
Or if fierce Ebenhard disdainfully
Refused to grant it so, still must he die.
Then Alice fair returned, and soon she brought
The tender Columbe to accept the thought,
For if she did refuse, then must he die:
And Ebenhard, albeit right stormily,
Accepted also, for he once had loved
Sir Ermolai, and was to pity moved,
Now when he found fair Alice was returned:
'Twas punishment enough that he had burned
His castle and the knight in prison cast,
Sore wounded; nor did he mislike at last
The desperate courage of that frantic knight;
And grimly laughed he thinking of the night

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When Ermolai had drawn him from his tower,
Booted and armed, the sightless hills to scour.
Now came the morning when the knight was led
Upon the felon cart to lose his head:
About that hearse the thronging people come,
And some did shout, some were for pity dumb,
Some wept his youth; but he with unmoved eyes
Erected sat, and none could know what sighs
His spirit at the thought of Alice gave,
E'en as he travelled to his bloody grave.
Ah, thought he not of Columbe? He no more
Of Columbe thought, though at the first so sore
Had been his penitence for all her wrong;
For after Alice left him, madly strong
Had grown of her his love infatuate,
And oft did he suspect, the while he sate
Besieged within his hold, that Columbe had
Decoyed and slain her; and resentment mad
Surged in his soul, and fury born of hell:
All this did penitential shame expel,
And Columbe had deceased in his regret:
Now too of his captivity the fret,
The long elapse of time, his wasted lands,
His followers slain, his wounds, and shameful bands,
The sentence of his death, these things endured
For Alice, these his piteous heart ensured
And stubborned still for Alice; for to seem
A sufferer for love is love's own dream:

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By suffering his heart had purged remorse,
And flung that burden gladly from its course;
And, filled with Alice, to the last event
Bound straitly on the shameful cart he went.
When lo, what magic to his shaping mind
Completes her image, that his eye should find
Fair Alice there? She in the street doth stand,
Holding her sister Columbe by the hand,
For so they had resolved that, as he hied,
He should be ransomed from his deadly ride
In front of death itself; and presently
Her voice assures him more that it is she,
Bespeaking him—"Sir knight, why rid'st thou there?
Behold thou shalt now wed this lady fair,
And thou art lightly free from all thy woe;
The emperor wills, and she consents thereto,
Duke Ebenhard consents; therefore rejoice."
But when her face he saw, and heard her voice,
His bonds he shook as if he madman were;
And Ebenhard bade loose him from the chair,
Deeming he would to Columbe go; but he
Ran but to Alice fair: ah, tenderly
Weep ye who hapless love commiserate,
Weep ye who know how faith succumbs to fate,
And love is mingled with perversity:
For he to Alice went, and tenderly
He sought to compass her in his arms twain:
But she began to say her words again,

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And pointed him to Columbe for his love,
And more repelled him as the more he strove.
More piteous that strife than very death.
Right so came Ebenhard with furious breath
At this despite, and shouted to the train
That they should mount him on the hearse again,
And draw the cutting bonds unto the bone:
Whereat fair Columbe with most heavy moan
Prayed mercy, horror-stricken she to find
Such horror; eagerly she now resigned
Her love to Alice, that her wrathful sire
Might therefore from his threats of death retire.
Like to two doves that rise upon the air
With head and wing embracing, so in prayer
Those sisters were, as they did there contend.
Ah, bootlessly their tears they did expend,
They could not stay the falling doom of fate,
Nor into pity altered angry hate,
Nor stopped the creaking of the deadly wain;
Now haste we to despatch this doleful train.
When Alice fair perceived they might not stay
This woeful deed;—"'Tis I must die to-day,"
'Gan she to say, and from her bosom snatched
That poisoned ring which Columbe had despatched
Before to her; and this she raised on high;
"That ye may live," she said, "'tis I must die."
She turned it round where it in gold was set,
"This deed from you a benediction get:"

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She thrust the poison through her white white teeth,
" God give to all the joy of my last breath ; "
She set the ring around fair Columbe's hand,
" I wed thee unto him ; oh, understand
That thus to both of you my love is known."
She fell before them dead as any stone.

But Ermolai passed on to lose his head ;
And they returning found fair Columbe dead,
Dead in a fatal swoon upon the ground,
And on her hand the poisoned ring they found.

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Rapture: an Ode.

I.

What is this?
The white and crumbling clouds leave bare the blue;
Shines out the central sun with golden hue;
And all the fruit-trees, rolling blossom-boughed,
Are white and billowy as the rolling cloud.
The warm beam bedded sleeps upon the trees,
The springing thickets and the gorse-bound leas;
Sleeps where I lie at ease,
Pulling the ruby orchis and the pale
Half-withered cowslip from the hill-side grass,
Midway the brow that overhangs the vale,
Where the sleepy shadows pass,
And the sunbeam sleeps till all is grown
Into one burning sapphire stone,
All air, all earth, each violet-deepened zone.

II.

It sleeps and broods upon the moss-mapped stone,
The thready mosses and the plumy weeds;

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Numbers the veined flowers one after one,
Their colours and their leaves and ripening seeds:
Above, around, its influence proceeds;
It tracks in gleams the stream through crowding bush,
And beds of sworded flags and bearded rush,
Where slow it creeps along the lower ground;
The ridges far above are all embrowned,
The golden heavens over all are ploughed
In furrows of fine tissue that abound,
And melting fragments of the whitest cloud.

III.

Ah, what is this, that now with sated eyes
And humming ears the soul no more descries?
Drawn back upon the spirit all the sense
Becomes intelligence;
And to be doubly now unfolded feels
That which itself reveals;
Double the world of all that may appear
To eye or hand or ear;
Double the soul of that which apprehends
By that which sense transcends.

IV.

For deep the cave of human consciousness;
The thoughts, like light, upon its depths may press,
Seeking and finding wonders numberless;

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But never may they altogether pierce
The hollow gloom so sensitive and fierce
Of the deep bosom : far the light may reach,
There is a depth unreached ; in clearest speech
There is an echo from an unknown place :
And in the dim, unknown, untrodden space
Our life is hidden ; were we all self-known,
No longer should we live ; a wonder shown
Is wonderful no more ; and being flies
For ever from its own self-scrutinies.
Here is the very effort of the soul
To keep itself unmingled, safe, and whole
In changes and the flitting feints of sense :
Here essence holds a calm and sure defence ;
It is a guarded shrine and sacred grove,
A fountain hidden where no foot may rove,
A further depth within a sounded sea ;
A mirror 'tis from hour to hour left free
By things reflected : and because 'tis so,
Therefore the outer world and all its show
Is as the music of the upper wave
To the deep Ocean in his sunken cave ;
A part of its own self, yet but its play,
Which doth the sunbeam and the cloud convey
To central deeps, where in awful shade
The stormless heart receives the things conveyed,
Knowing the cloud by darkness, and the light
By splendours dying through the infinite.

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V.

And being such the soul doth recognize
The doubleness of nature, that there lies
A soul occult in Nature, hidden deep
As lies the soul of man in moveless sleep.
And like a dream
Broken in circumstance and foolish made,
Through which howe'er the future world doth gleam,
And floats a warning to the gathered thought,
Like to a dream,
Through sense and all by sense conveyed,
Into our soul the shadow of that soul
Doth float.
Then are we lifted up erect and whole
In vast confession to that universe
Perceived by us: our soul itself transfers
Thither by instinct sure; it swiftly hails
The mighty spirit similar; it sails
In the divine expansion; it perceives
Tendencies glorious, distant; it enweaves
Itself with excitations more than thought
Unto that soul unveiled and yet unsought.

VI.

Ye winds and clouds of light,
Ye lead the soul to God;
The new-born soul that height

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With rapturous foot hath trod,
And is received of God:
God doth the soul receive
Which mounts toward Him, and alone would dwell
With Him; though finite with the Infinite,
Though finite, rising with a might
Like to infinitude.
Gently receiving such He doth dispel
All solitary horror with delight,
Honouring the higher mood.

VII.

For though the soul pants with fierce ecstasy
The unattainable to grasp, to be
For ever mingled with infinity;
And this in vain, since God Himself withdraws
From human knowledge, e'en as its own laws
Seclude the soul from sense;
Yet not from love He hies;
From love God never flies.
Love is the soul's best sense, which God descries,
Which bares the covert of intelligence:
And, honouring in love the higher mood,
With lovely joys He fills the solitude
Of His own presence, whither trusting Him
The soul hath mounted: lo, it might have found
Utter destruction on this higher ground,
Tenuity of air and swooning dim

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For lack of breath; but now it finds hereby
A lovely vesture of infinity,
And ecstasies that nourish ecstasy.
God giveth love to love, and ministers
Substance to substance; life to life He bears.

VIII.

Therefore, ye winds and ye
High moving clouds of light,
Ye rivers running free,
Thou glory of the sea,
Thou glory of the height,
The gleam beside the bush,
The tremble of the rush,
To me made manifest,
The beauty of the flower
In summer's sunny power,
Portions of entity supreme ye be,
And motions massed upon eternal rest.

IX.

Broad breezes, clouds of light,
Thither ye lead the soul,
To this most sacred height
Above the sacred whole:
The azure world is not so fair,
The azure world and all the circling air,

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As that true spiritual kingdom known
Unto the spirit only and alone;
Thither the soul ye bear,
Oh winds and clouds of light.

X.

Ye winds and clouds of light,
That bear the soul to God;
The new-born soul that height
By ecstasy hath trod.



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Late Repentance.

Oh that this kiss with life could warm
The whitened lips it dies upon;
That these hot tears could warm to life
That brow more chill than marble stone.
Another hour, and they shall come
To bear thee to the last repose;
Beloved, I must take my leave;
This is the close, this is the close.

Wear not to me that look of peace,
That peaceful look of silent rest,
Unlike the look of calm enforced,
When thy still spirit lay oppressed;
Unlike the look which ever sought
My wayward moods to know and meet;
Oh could that gaze come back again,
And raise those wistful eyelids sweet,

That I might kiss it all away,
And bid it so for ever cease,
And fall upon my knees and pray,
And spend my life to win thee peace!
Oh, I could madden o'er thy form,
But I thy rest should discompose;
Thy arm falls coldly back again;
Is this the close, is this the close?

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Song.

The feathers of the willow
Are half of them grown yellow
 Above the swelling stream;
And ragged are the bushes,
And rusty now the rushes,
 And wild the clouded gleam.

The thistle now is older,
His stalk begins to moulder,
 His head is white as snow;
The branches all are barer,
The linnet's song is rarer,
 The robin pipeth now.

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